The Sikhs

Images of a Heritage

T.S.Randhawa

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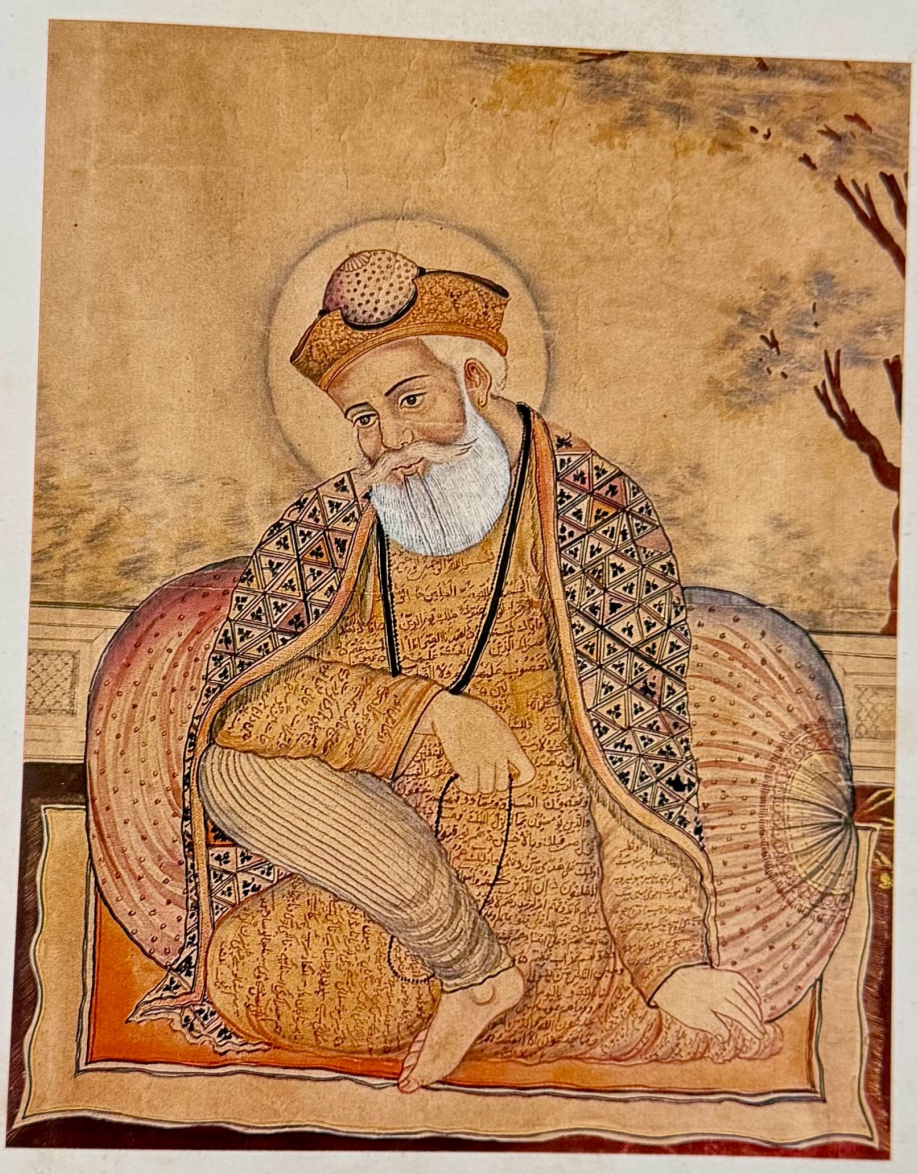

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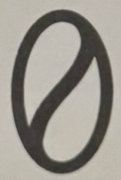
Text and photographs by
T. S. Randhawa



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Cover: Sikh chieftains, by A. Soltykoff.
Endpaper: The authorized method of preparing *amrit* for the *khalsa*.
Opening page: Guru Nanak, with prayer inscribed on his robe.
Top: Illustrations from Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Military Manual, prepared in Persian by his European officers (seated facing Maharaja Ranjit Singh) General Allard (second from right) and General Ventura (third from right).
Above: Illustration of a drill in the manual.
Opposite: Portrait of Maharaja Sher Singh on ivory.

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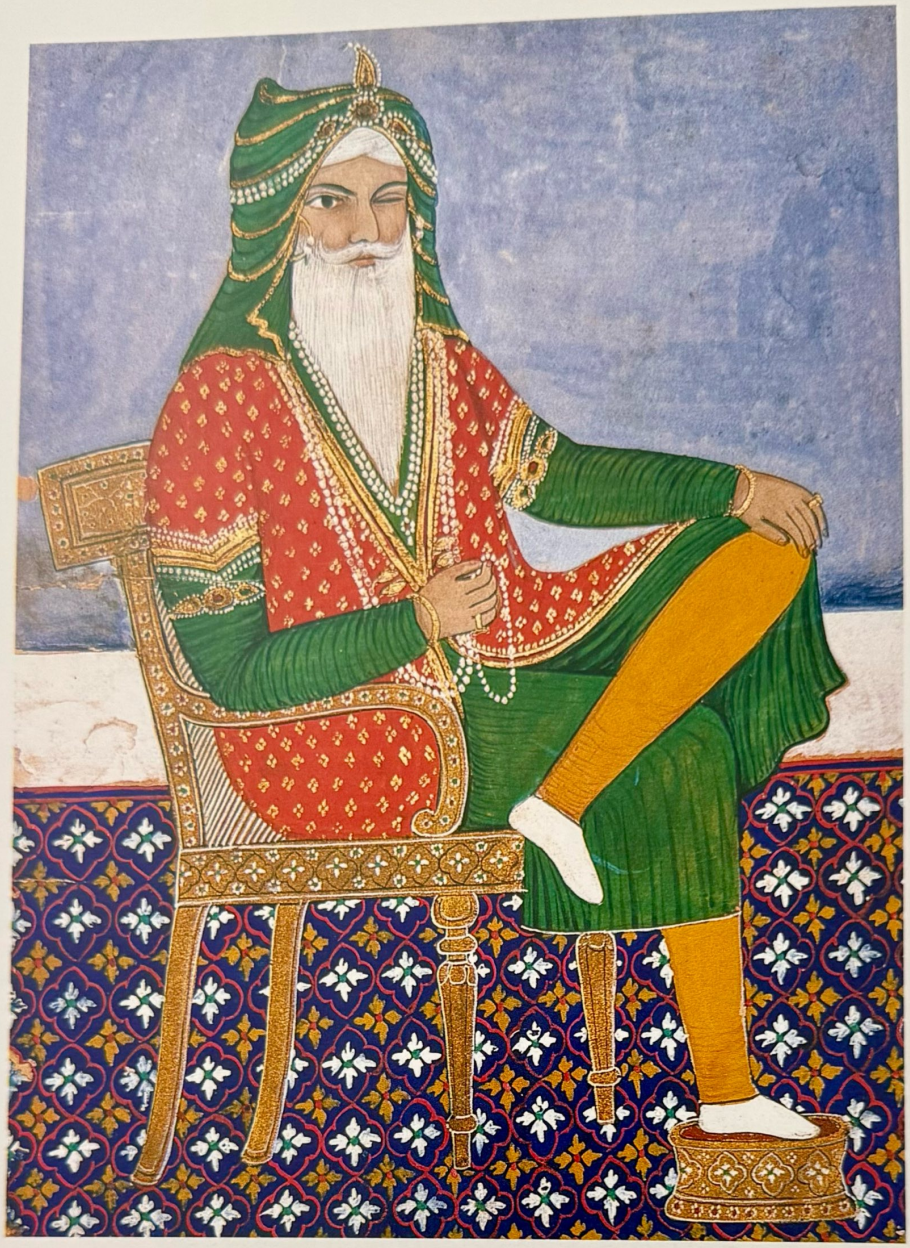
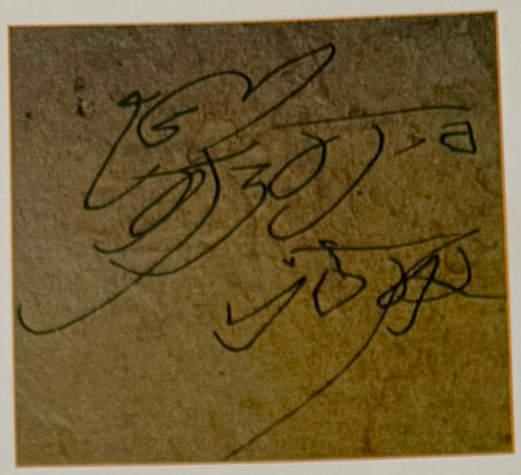


Above: Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
Opposite: *'Ek omkar satgur prasad,'* written by Guru Gobind Singh in a prayer book of the Bagrian family.



This is the first in a series of two books dedicated to Dr. M.S. Randhawa, for his earnestness in acquiring miniature paintings of Punjab and the hill states for Indian museums. Many works had already left the country during British times and after independence the exodus would have quickened, except for this effort of his. A large number of the paintings illustrated in this book are part of the collections acquired by him for government galleries.

The canvas of the book is more than what the title suggests. It expands to cover the regions of greater Punjab during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign. The images are not only those of Sikh personalities, but also of other subjects portrayed by the painters in the Sikh states. Also included are paintings and images of Sikh subjects by non-Sikh painters, like the superb Tanjore painting of the ten Sikh Gurus and, ofcourse, those by European artists. Though Sikhs are the main subjects of the book one cannot leave out personalities like the Nawabs of Malerkotla, who were prominent in the history of Punjab. In all, the book is an interesting medley of enchanting images, in diverse mediums and styles used in Punjab in the last three centuries.

Above: A Tanjore painting of the ten Sikh Gurus.
Opposite: The rock impression said to be of Guru Nanak, at Gurudwara Pathher saheb, Ladakh.

CONTENTS

Introduction	11
Paintings & ivories	27
Murals & frescoes	98
Gilded reliefs	114
Lithographs & oils	118
Photographs	147
Medals & marbles	154
Credits & notes	155
Bibliography	156

Above: Guru Gobind Singh.

INTRODUCTION

Sikh painting has often been derided by scholars and whatever little note taken of it has been in the context of portraiture. H. Goetz summed up what many critics have said of it: "In its late form Kangra painting was taken over by the Sikhs, at that time upstarts - boisterous, realistic and puritan. There was no room for Rajput romanticism and mystic symbolism. Like the early Mughals they appreciated a realistic portrait, enjoyed a foul *zenana* jest or could use a few religious pictures where Hindu mythology had intruded into the Sikh cult. Later they began to appreciate the whole range of Kangra themes, like the Hindus living under their rule. But then the Sikh kingdom was already disintegrating and Indian painting everywhere declining fast."

In view of the role of Sikhs in history and circumstances these have been harsh views. Sikhism is a comparatively young religion and after Guru Gobind Singh the holy book, the Granth Sahib, became the primary object of worship, limiting the role of religious imagery, which in any case was not for worship but symbolic. Secondly, Sikhism is a very open religion and even the holy book, Guru Granth Sahib, is full of literature from other religions and languages. The subjects to be painted, therefore, were diluted by the Hindu pantheon, and many paintings and murals of the Sikhs feature Hindu themes, gods and goddesses. The painters at Sikh courts even executed beautiful paintings on Gita Govinda and Bhagwat Puran subjects. Behind all this (in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries) was the background of constant turmoil and war due to which they could hardly be expected to indulge in such luxuries in the same degree as done in the hills, and earlier in the stable Mughal order. During periods of strong rule and comparative peace, like that of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, artistic activities were encouraged and flourished. Finally, traditional miniature painting in Punjab also lost out in time due to the advent of British painters and engravers and, finally, to photography.

The painted images of the Sikhs fall into three types - miniatures, ivories and murals. Miniature painting was the exclusive preserve of the royal families and though courtiers and nobles were shown with Maharaja Ranjit Singh and later on his sons, their paintings are lesser in number and they were often relegated to the smaller ivory paintings. Naturally, the best painters also, like Imam Bakhsh of Lahore, preferred to paint for royal patrons where the monetary returns and fame were more. It was in murals and frescoes that the other sections of society could indulge in freely, on the walls of their *haveli* and their local *gurudwara*, temple, *akhara* or *dharamshala*, though the range was still limited. It is unfortunate that we do not have substantial glimpses of the general society in those times but that is true of all miniature paintings, whether Mughal, Rajasthani or Kangra. There is tremendous vitality in the people of Punjab and its culture, and during the days of the Lahore court the richness of its crafts must have been considerable, but hardly any such images exist. Credit goes to later painters like Kehar Singh and Kapoor Singh who left some record of every day life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, of the people, craftspersons and trades.

The two broad themes of Sikh painting were religious and court portraiture. Stylized paintings of the Sikh Gurus were being painted in Guler and other hill areas even before the advent of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Also popular were *janamsakhi* series based on the life of Guru Nanak. A typical *janamsakhi* would consist of a number of folios with paintings of Guru Nanak along with narrative. The paintings would be of notable episodes in his life and some were indeed well rendered. Even though the art of miniature painting in Punjab was soon to wane, some brilliant works were done. The paintings done at Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court at Lahore and the paintings of the Sikh Gurus done at the Patiala court, around the middle of the nineteenth century, were as marvelous as the best of other miniature paintings.

Sikh religion is unique to have teachings and examples on extremes of human conduct, that of piety and forbearance preached by Guru Nanak and the call to arms of Guru Gobind Singh. The Sikh Gurus in between also occupy special positions for their contributions to the Sikh religion, their acts of resistance and martyrdom in the face of oppression from the Mughals and the process of moulding the Sikh identity. Initially when Guru Nanak founded the religion the identity of Sikhs was not too conspicuous as Sikhism welcomed people of all religions, castes and classes. Only over the years, under the later Gurus, Sikh identity crystallized, culminating with the forming of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh in April 1699. In the painted images, therefore, the largest number are those of the founder Guru Nanak and of Guru Gobind Singh. Individual portraits of other Gurus are also there as well as those on specific themes like the compilation of the Guru Granth Sahib, the establishment of the Golden Temple, depiction of sacrifices and acts of martyrdom by the Gurus. Guru Nanak is invariably shown with his companions Bala and Mardana in lively scenes from the *janamsakhi* series, and sometimes even with Guru Gobind Singh, apart from other paintings depicting all the ten Gurus together. The paintings of the Sikh Gurus were never contemporary to their lives and were on the basis of historical facts and legends. Guru Gobind Singh was the ideal of the Sikh painters and has been lovingly depicted in the various series. He was a warrior saint and his entire family was martyred, including his four sons. He was also a man of letters and among other treatises wrote the Dasam Granth. These qualities and his turbulent life and struggle made him the most important icon for the painters. In the paintings Guru Gobind Singh is always shown as a gentle warrior, baptizing the Sikhs or with his 'beloved five', the *panj pyare*. His courage as well as literary skills come out very clearly in his famous Zafarnama to the evil emperor Aurangzeb:

"I have no faith in thine oath to which thou tookest the one God as witness. I have not a particle of confidence in thee. Thy treasurer and thy ministers are all false. He who putteth faith in thine oath on the Quran is thereby a ruined man. The insolent crow cannot touch him who hath fallen under the shadow of the huma. He who taketh the protection of a powerful tiger cannot be approached by a goat, a buffalo, or a deer. Had I even secretly sworn on the volume of my choice faith to accept thy religion, I should not have had to withdraw my infantry and cavalry from Anandpur. As to my defeat at Chamkaur, what could forty men do when a hundred thousand came on them unawares? The oath-breakers attacked them abruptly with swords, arrows, and muskets. I was constrained to engage in the combat, and I fought to the utmost of my ability. When an affair passeth beyond the region of diplomacy, it is lawful to have recourse to the sword. Had I been able to repose confidence in thine oath on the Quran, I would not have abandoned my city. Had I not known that thou wert crafty and deceitful as a fox, I would never on any account have come hither. He who cometh to me and sweareth on the Quran ought not to kill or imprison me. Thine army came clothed like blue-bottles, and all of a sudden charged with a loud shout. Every soldier of thine who advanced beyond his defences to attack my position, fell deluged in blood. Thy troops who had committed no aggression received no injury at our hands. When I saw that Nahar Khan entered the fight, I quickly gave him the taste of my arrow. Many soldiers who came with him and boasted of their prowess ignominiously deserted the field of battle. Another Afghan officer advanced like a rushing flood, an arrow, or a musket ball. He made many assaults, received many wounds and at last, while in the act of killing two of my Sikhs, was killed himself. Khwaja Mardud remained behind a wall and came not forth like a man. Had I but seen his face, I would certainly have bestowed an arrow on him too. At last many were killed on both sides by showers of arrows and bullets, and the earth became red as a rose. Heads and legs lay in heaps as if the field were covered with balls and sticks. The wizzing of arrows, the twanging of bows, and a universal hubbub reached the sky. Men, the bravest of the brave, fought like madmen. But how could forty even of the bravest succeed when opposed by a countless host? When the lamp of day was veiled, the queen of night came forth in all her splendour, and God who protected me showed me the way to escape from mine enemies. There was not a hair of my head touched, nor did I in any way suffer."

"Did I not know that thou, O faithless man, wert a worshipper of wealth and perjurer? Thou keepest no faith and observest no religion. Thou knowest not God, and believest not in Muhammad. He who hath regard for his religion never swerveth from his promise. Thou hast no idea of what an oath on the Quran is, and canst have no belief in Divine Providence. Wert thou to take a hundred oaths on the Quran, I would not even then trust thee in the slightest. Hadst thou any intention of keeping thine oath, thou wouldst have girded up thy loins and come to me. When thou didst swear by Muhammad and called the word of God to witness, it was incumbent on thee to observe that oath. Were the Prophet himself present here, I would make it my special object to inform him of thy treachery. Do what is incumbent on thee, and adhere to thy written promise. Thou shouldst have cheerfully fulfilled it, and also the verbal promises of thine envoy. Everybody ought to be a man of his word, and not utter one thing while he meditateth another. Thou didst promise to abide by the words of thy qazi. If thou hast spoken truly, then come to me. If thou desire to seal thy promise on the Quran, I will gladly send it to thee for the purpose. If thou come to the village of Kangar, we shall have an interview. Thou shalt not run the slightest danger on the way, for the whole tribe of Bairars are under me. Come to me that we may speak to each other, and that I may utter kind words to thee."

"I am a slave and servant of the King of kings, and ready to obey His order with my life. Should His order reach me, I will go to thee with all my heart. If thou

have any belief in God, delay not in this matter. It is thy duty to know God. He never ordered thee to annoy others. Thou art seated on an emperor's throne, yet how strange is thy justice, thine attributes and thy regard for religion! Alas a hundred times! Alas for thy sovereignty! Strange, strange is thy decree! Promises not meant to be fulfilled injure those who make them. Smite not any one mercilessly with the sword, or a sword from high shall smite thyself. O man, be not reckless, fear God, He cannot be flattered or praised. The King of kings is without fear. He is the true Emperor of earth and heaven. God is the master of both worlds. He is the Creator of all animals from the feeble ant to the powerful elephant. He is the Protector of the miserable and Destroyer of the reckless. His name is the Support of the unhappy. It is He who showeth man the way he ought to go. Thou art bound by thine oath on the Quran. Bring the matter to a good issue according to thy promises. It is incumbent on thee to act wisely, and be discreet in all thine actions. What though my four sons were killed, I remain behind like a coiled snake. What bravery is it to quench a few sparks of life? Thou art merely exciting a raging fire the more. How well spoke the sweet-toned Firdausi, "Haste is the devil's work!" I would have gone many times to thee had thy promise been kept when the bullocks were plundered. As thou didst forget thy word on that day, so will God forget thee. God will grant thee the fruit of the evil deed thou didst design. It is good to act according to thy religion, and to know that God is dearer than life. I do not deem thou knowest God, since thou hast done acts of oppression. Wherefore the great God knoweth thee not, and will not receive thee with all thy wealth. Hadst thou sworn a hundred times on the Quran, I would not have trusted thee in the slightest even for a moment. I will not enter thy presence, nor travel on the same road with thee, but if God so will it, I will proceed towards thee."

"Fortunate art thou Aurangzeb, king of kings, expert swordsman and rider. Handsome is thy person, and intelligent art thou. Emperor and ruler of the country, thou art clever to administer thy kingdom, and skilled to wield the sword. Thou art generous to thy co-religionists, and prompt to crush thine enemies. Thou art the great dispenser of kingdoms and wealth. Thy generosity is profuse, and in battle thou art firm as a mountain. Exalted is thy position; thy loftiness is as that of the Pleiades. Thou art king of kings, and ornament of the thrones of the world. Thou art monarch of the world, but far from thee is religion. I wanted to kill the hillmen who were full of strife. They worshipped idols, and I was an idol-breaker. Behold the power of the good and pure God who by means of one man killed hundreds of thousands. What can an enemy do when God the Friend is kind? His function it is, as the great Bestower, to bestow. He giveth deliverance and pointeth out the way to His creatures. He teacheth the tongue to utter His praises. In the hour of action he blindeth the enemy. He rescueth the helpless and protecteth them from injury. The Merciful showeth mercy to him who acteth honestly. God bestoweth peace on him who heartily performeth His service. How can an enemy lead astray him with whom the Guide of the way is well pleased? Should tens of thousands proceed against such a person, the Creator will be his guardian. When thou lookest to thine army and wealth, I look to God's praises. Thou art proud of thine empire, while I am proud of the kingdom of the immortal God. Be not heedless; this caravansary is only for a few days. People leave it at all times. Behold the revolution which passeth over every denizen and house in this faithless world. Even though thou art strong, annoy not the weak. Lay not the axe to thy kingdom. When God is a friend, what can an enemy do even though he multiply himself a hundred times? If an enemy practise enmity a thousand times, he cannot, as long as God is a friend, injure even a hair of one's head."

In court painting there appeared to be two distinct groups of paintings - those done in the Lahore court during (and just after) Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time and others painted in the remaining Sikh states. Those of the Lahore court were dominated by the subjects of Ranjit Singh, his family and courtiers, while in the other Sikh states their rulers were the main subjects. The linking of painters with the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh occurred with his conquest of the hill states, where the art of miniature painting had reached its zenith under Maharaja Sansar Chand. In 1809 Sansar Chand was attacked by the Gurkhas and he asked for Maharaja Ranjit Singh's assistance, who liberated him from them but made him his tributary. It was fortunate that the Governor he appointed at Kangra was the genial Sardar Desa Singh Majithia who built up a good rapport with the local population and facilitated the crossing over of painters from the courts of the hill Rajas to that of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In any case, around that time, with the loss of independence of their hill Rajas the painters too would have been looking for greener pastures. Describing the Governor, Barnes writes, "Sirdar Lehna Singh enjoyed a good reputation in the hills; he was a mild and lenient Governor, his periodical visits were not made the pretense for oppressing and plundering the people; he maintained a friendly and generous intercourse with the deposed Hill Chiefs and contributed, by his conciliatory manners, to alleviate their fallen position. At the same time, he is held in favourable recollection by the peasantry. His assessments were moderate for a native system and, although he did not possess that force of character to keep his agents under proper control, yet he never oppressed himself, nor willingly countenanced oppression in others." "He was also," according to Griffin, "known as Hasmuddaula, the Sword of the State and was a man of considerable ability. He was a skillful mechanist and an original inventor. He much improved the Sikh ordnance. Among other things, he invented a clock which showed the hour, the day of the month and the changes of the moon. He was fond of astronomy and mathematics, and was master of several languages. As an administrator, he was very popular. The poor were never oppressed by him, his assessments were moderate and his decisions essentially just. As a statesman, he may be said to have been almost the only honest man in Lahore."

After Kangra in 1809, Guler was subjugated in 1813, followed by Jasrota and Jammu. The links of the Sikhs with the hill people continued to become stronger and Sardar Desa Singh Majithia also married a hill woman. In 1828, Maharaja Ranjit Singh did not appreciate Anirudh Chand refusing Dhian Singh's proposal of the marriage of his son Hira Singh with Anirudh Chand's sister, especially since Hira Singh was his great favourite. He himself led a force to Kangra in 1828 but by the time he reached there Anirudh Chand had fled for Hardwar where he founded the kingdom of Tehri Garhwal, and Kangra came totally under the Sikhs without firing a single shot. There is not much evidence of his court painters following Anirudh Chand and he took with him his best folios, including the famous Gita Govinda series. Hira Singh ultimately married the daughter of Fateh Chand, uncle of Anirudh Chand. In the process Maharaja Ranjit Singh also married two daughters of Sansar Chand and Nokhu, his Gaddan Rani. The links of the Sikh kingdom with Kangra and its court painters could not have been more complete. Moreover, in 1830 he appointed Raja Sher Singh as Governor General of the Kangra hills, which was a good choice as Sher Singh was as affable as Desa Singh Majithia, and in 1832 it was Lehna Singh Majithia, also a good soul. When Sher Singh was appointed Governor General of Kangra he was only 23 years old, youthful, handsome and energetic yet gentle. He was an immediate success with the local painters and there is a lovely painting of him being waited upon by a Kangra girl after a bath, with his hair open. Sher Singh was to later become a great favourite of the European artists also. In 1833 Ladakh was added to the Sikh kingdom.

The style of Kangra painting as applied to the Sikh courts and subjects did undergo certain modifications and modern accouterments made their appearances, particularly in the forms of chairs and umbrellas. Two paintings of Radha and Krishna are published in this book from the later Sikh period, in which they are alternately sitting on a chair and a sofa. Even the frontispiece of the Guru Granth Sahib illustrated in this book (circa 1840, Kashmir) shows a painting in which Guru Arjan is dictating the text sitting on a chair. Also of significance was the fact that during this period the painters gradually switched over from mineral and natural colours to artificial colours with obvious effect. Surprisingly, females were hardly painted in Sikh miniature paintings and murals, apart from derivatives from the Kangra hills legacy. Only Maharani Jindan, the prima donna in the drama which unfolded towards the end of the Sikh kingdom, was painted and sketched. Before joining Ranjit's boudoir she was the daughter of Ranjit's dog keeper, Manna. No traces are there of other prominent Sikh ladies having been painted, though there were quite a few - starting with Sada Kaur, Ranjit's resolute mother-in-law, who used her position in the Kanheya *misl* to help install Ranjit in the first place, though she later fell out with him when she persisted, successfully, in foisting the claims of her daughter's son, Sher Singh, to the line of succession; Mehtab Kaur, another prominent wife of Ranjit Singh, who is said to have had forty six wives in all; or Chand Kaur, Kharak Singh's wife. Photographs exist of Daleep Singh's wife, Maharani Bamba Daleep Singh, who was half English and half Abyssinian. The last famous lady in the line was Princess Bamba Daleep Singh, later Mrs. Bamba Sutherland (as often written - 'she married a certain Col. Sutherland'). Much prior to that, most of the wives of the Sikh gurus were exceptional personalities, but none were painted. Among them were Bebe Nanaki (Guru Nanak's elder sister) and Mata Sulakhani (Guru Nanak's wife), Mata Khiwi (Guru Angad's wife) who started the tradition of the *langar*, free kitchen, Bibi Bhani who was Guru Amardas's daughter, wife of Guru Ramdas and the mother of Guru Arjan Dev, Mata Ganga - Guru Arjan Dev's wife, Mata Nanaki - wife of Guru Hargobind and Guru Tegh Bahadur's mother, Guru Har Rai's wife and Guru Harkrishan's mother Mata Kishan Kaur, Mata Gujri - Guru Tegh Bahadur's wife and Guru Gobind Singh's mother, and Guru Gobind Singh's wives Mata Sahib Devan and Mata Sundri.

A shortcoming of paintings of the period of the Lahore court was the relative lack of a variety of subjects. Most of the Lahore court paintings show the seated Maharaja Ranjit Singh with his real and accepted sons Kharak Singh, Sher Singh, the infant Daleep Singh; the favourite boy Hira Singh is also shown with Naunehal Singh; Dhian Singh is respectfully standing at the back and occasionally shown with his brothers Suchet Singh and Gulab Singh of Jammu. Ranjit Singh is sometimes surrounded by his non-Sikh courtiers like his Finance Minister Dina Nath the Brahmin, his Foreign Minister Aziz-ud-din and Jamadar Khushal Singh, who was actually a Brahmin. Also included in some paintings are Europeans who organized his army - the Italians Ventura and Avitabile who were infantry experts, Allard who was his cavalry organizer and another French man, General Court, who trained and equipped his artillery. Also included were his friends from Afghanistan and other European adventurers. (In fact, all these elements of his court are brilliantly portrayed in a later oil painting of August Theodore Schoefft, a Hungarian who visited his court). Coupled with this was the fact that Sikh paintings on subjects other than portraiture were restricted in any case. The miniature paintings, thus, on surface appear to be very limited in diversity but to appreciate them one has to understand the historical events and the intrigues of the court - and then a great drama unfolds, which finally ended when the British defeated Maharaja Ranjit Singh's successors and disbanded the court of Lahore in 1849. In fact, the British went to the extreme of auctioning the treasures of the court to recover their campaign costs, after dispatching the best objects to London - the Koh-i-noor, jewels and the golden throne.

Information regarding this period is available from a number of sources - the camp chronicle of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, 'Umdat-ut-Tawarikh', British government records and accounts of European travellers, artists and painters. The Umdat-ut-Tawarikh was a sort of daily diary full of hyperbole and praises to

Maharaja Ranjit Singh, though full of interesting facts. The British government records appear to be fairly accurate on information, but the most absorbing and relevant to this book are the accounts of the other Europeans, even though their superciliousness sometimes comes through. Generally these accounts are frank, appreciative as well as critical and chatty. Thus we have Emily Eden mentioning that Sher Singh was inviting himself too often to her dinners with his son Pratap Singh "with eyes as big as saucers, and emeralds bigger than his eyes", and Allard with his great black and white beard resembled a piebald horse. She found Gulab Singh to be quite "horrid" though his brother Dhian Singh was "uncommonly good looking" and Lal Singh, Rani Jindan's paramour, was sensually built. Vigne easily saw through Dhian Singh's sham display of trying to throw himself in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's funeral pyre (he would have been greatly disappointed if he had not been prevented from doing so). From a cheeky account we learn of how a 'wretched' painting of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was sought to be presented to the Queen along with rich Kashmiri gifts, and that "the chief painter in the Lahore court is certainly not a Raphael." Vivid descriptions of scenes at Maharaja Ranjit Singh's parties are given where liquor and wine flowed freely. Many, like Barr, could not comprehend with their European sensibilities the Indian form and perspective of painting. This brash young lieutenant escorted Col. C.M. Wade on his mission to Afghanistan and, enroute, visiting the Lahore court he wrote: "We were admitted through a low archway beneath the throne to a small court, and close to a building which contains the regal entrance to the hall of justice. The exterior of this is covered with paintings in oil of a very extravagant description, and evidently of late construction, as one subject represents the interview of the Maharajah with Lord William Bentinck at Roopur. The parties are supposed by the artist to be assembled in the audience tent, the Sikhs being arranged on one side and the British on the other. The two great potentates occupy the center of the scene, and Lady William, accoutered in white trousers, boots, and gold straps, is seated a few paces behind her husband. An uglier set of vagabonds than the man of daubs has made of our countrymen cannot well be conceived; though the people who accompanied us regarded them as likenesses, and were eager to point out "Macnaghten Sahib", the "Bakhshee Sahib', and others, who have only to see their portraits to be grateful. We were subsequently shown into what may in truth be termed "the Painted Chamber", as it is adorned with pictures of battles in which the two Generals (Allard and Ventura) were engaged, and executed on the chunam walls by native artists. The perspective of these scenes is most ridiculous; and at the siege of Moultan the cannons are turned up on end to enable the gunners to load them, the figures overtop the fortification, and the cavalry seem to be maneuvering in the air; and absurdities of a similar nature are perpetrated throughout them all, and no doubt afford much amusement to their gallant owners, whose policy has led them this far to assimilate their dwellings with those of the native population; for it can hardly be supposed their taste is so far vitiated as to regard these embellishments as ornamental." Barr did not spare even Lord Krishna and his comments are amusing! "Crishna's exploits occasionally partake of the ludicrous and disgusting. In one compartment he is portrayed with a milkmaid shampooing his great toe; in another, he is perched up in a tree, from the branches of which depend various articles of dress he has stolen from some fair damsels who are refreshing themselves in a limpid stream below, and whose heads and hands, clasped in a suplicatory manner, appear above water beseeching him to return their apparel, but to no purpose, as he is only laughing at their distress. In a third, he is dashing out the brains of a man with his club; and in a fourth, tearing out the entrails of a prostrate foe with the most brutal ferocity." It needed the sensitivity of a scholar like E.B. Havell to appreciate the subtleties of Sikh miniature painting. In his book 'Indian Sculpture and Painting (1908)', describing a painting (done during the period of Sikh influence) showing Mian Jai Singh of Guler hearing musicians, he wrote, "Like the pure melody of an old folk-song, it is a true creation of national sentiment, of the poetic impulse which flows spontaneously from the heart of a people inspired by the joy of life and love of beauty. Here we have.....the 'sunshine of sunshine' given with pure delight with which the lark trills his song of joy in the high heavens on a summer morning. The figures in the picture are by no means attractive types or very deeply studied as to character; but their flowing draperies and the gay colours of the musical instruments, together with the pearly whiteness of the marble and the bright hues of the flowers, serve the purpose of the artist - to express the beauty and gladness of the radiant Indian sunlight." There were also Britishers like Macauliffe, who left his comfortable career in the Indian Civil Service to translate the religious texts of the Sikhs, a job which he did admirably well and ran up a debt doing so. Overall these are interesting accounts which help in giving a perspective to the characters painted in the miniatures as well as the later lithographs and paintings. Once these personalities are understood the images of that period seem to spring to life, and the series become like pages from one big family album of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Even certain nuances at the court of Lahore seem obvious, like Maharaja Ranjit Singh having to periodically restrain Sher Singh from becoming too close to British guests and influences. It was also ironical that the real son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Kharak Singh, was no match compared to his great stature, was an opium addict, and did not receive good mentions by chroniclers. Even in paintings he does not stand out as a personality of significance.

The dazzle of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court was a great attraction for European artists. The Russian prince and artist Alexis Soltykoff wrote, "This morning, the King gave us a state audience. What a sight! I could scarcely believe my eyes. Everything glittered with precious stones and the brightest colours arranged in harmonious combinations. The green garden was decorated by a huge crowd of Sikhs in yellow, red, rose, white, gold, silver, green, lilac and azure, all armed and strikingly arrayed, some of them being in coats of mail.....In the midst of this bevy was the King, coming to meet us, a big stoutish man of forty, covered with the most beautiful jewels in the world. On his right arm was the Koh-i-Nur, the finest diamond that exists.....The other day we were invited to pass the

evening with the King whose palace is in a fortress at the other end of the city. The King received us in the open, in the midst of his warriors, in the moon-light in a vast courtyard, surrounded by crenellated walls. There were thirty magnificent horses there, covered with precious stones and illuminated by torches and by a kind of Bengal fire which cast a blue light from the tops of the walls. I might mention that the Punjabis are famous for their fireworks. Seen thus the white horses, with their emerald ornaments, seemed like dream figures, while the black ones, with their ruby decorations, looked like spectres from the Inferno, in the dim torchlight. The King, with the simple and unaffected air which distinguishes him, led us along some narrow corridors, and we soon found ourselves in another court, paneled with marble and hung with beautiful carpets. In the middle was a basin full of water-fowl and fine jets of water filled the air like diamond dust. Around it, thousands of illuminated globes of different colours gave faint, soft light like that of dawn. As we advanced towards some splendid tents of shawls and gold brocade in the opposite corner of the court, enormous red curtains were drawn up slowly one after another by means of cords, like curtains of a theatre, by Sikh warriors armed to the teeth, and as these curtains disappeared we were more and more overwhelmed by the splendour of a new hall which was disclosed to view, the walls and ceiling of which were decorated with green, white, and red crystals framed in gold and looking like a pavement of precious stones upon an enormous ladder. Thither we were conducted by the King, and on entering, we saw, spread out to view on brocade covered tables the royal arms; hundreds of swords, daggers, shields, cuirasses and helmets, all very richly decorated.....Then the girls arrived, some thirty in all, pretty but small and delicate, in splendid costumes with their little noses so loaded with jewels and their foreheads and eyebrows so gilded that one could hardly distinguish their features. Their feet and hands, adorned with rings and mirrors, were very pretty though dark. The transparent veils that covered them were of gold, silver, or bright colours. Their short coats of velvet or other costly materials and their tight trousers of silk were very pleasing to the eye. These charming girls approached the King one by one and gave him one or two rupees. The King, who was in conversation with the ambassador, turned to them with an air of careless good humour. There is so much that is good natured and straightforward about him that, although his figure is awkward, he is charming and one would say that, in spite of his nervous air, he possesses plenty of pluck in danger. It seemed a curious household. The girls approached without any fear, most of them laughing, and looking about them. Then they sat down together on the ground between the tables. Suddenly a plaintive melody was heard, and two of them began a slow dance, while the others sat, looking like butterflies."

The melodrama and nostalgia of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court did not end with his death but came back in waves during later periods also, especially during Dalip Singh's time, and lingered on right upto the death of the last of his direct family, Princess Bamba Sutherland, in 1957, at Lahore. "Born on 29 September, 1869 in London, Princess Bamba, with her younger brother and sisters, was placed on the death of their mother under the care of their father's Equerry Mr. Arthur Oliphant and his wife at Folkstone. She was sent to Oxford for her university education, and later married a Colonel Sutherland. Princess Bamba remained in the United Kingdom for part of her life and finally settled in Lahore, at first in Jail Road and subsequently at 104A, Model Town. A fellow resident recorded her pathetic condition: 'Old "Princess" Sutherland, widow of an English army doctor, and last descendant of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was heard complaining that she could not get a seat in the lorry (bus), when all Punjab should have been hers! The old lady.....spent her days dreaming about her ancestral glory.' She died at the age of eighty-eight, on Sunday, 10 March 1957. An item appeared in the newspaper the following day, giving a brief obituary and ending with the belief that 'the arrangements for her burial will be made by the United Kingdom Deputy High Commissioner, Lahore.' In fact her burial was arranged by her faithful secretary, Pir Karim Bakhsh Supra, to whom she bequeathed her property, including the collection of Schoefft's paintings, and some Sikh relics. She was laid to rest in the Gulberg Christian cemetery, two and a half miles across Lahore from the Fort. Neither the British nor the Sikhs were represented at her funeral. The Punjab was left to claim its own (Aijazzudin)."

In the immediate family of Ranjit Singh first in line to the throne was Kharak Singh who was born in 1802 by Rani Raj Kaur, who succeeded Ranjit Singh in June 1839 and died in November 1840. Ranjit's other descendants were - Sher Singh, born in 1807 by Mehtab Kaur, the most genial of Ranjit Singh's real and accepted sons, who after being the Governor of Kangra was for sometime Governor of Kashmir and Peshawar, became Maharaja on 18 January, 1841 and was murdered in September 1843; Daleep Singh, the doe-eyed son by Rani Jindan, catapulted to the throne when he was six years old but with the Sikhs losing to the British sent to England in 1854, became a Christian from 1853 till 1886, died in Paris in 1893; Naunehal Singh, son of Kharak Singh, born in 1821, died only a day after his father's death on 5 November, along with Udham Singh, son of Maharaja Gulab Singh, when they were returning from Kharak Singh's funeral; Pratap Singh, son of Maharaja Sher Singh, born in 1831, was murdered by the Sandhawalias in September 1843 along with his father, though even in his few years he made a lasting impression on European visitors. The other *dramatis personae* in the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh were the Faqirs Aziz-ud-din, his Foreign Affairs Minister, and his brother Nur-ud-din, Ranjit Singh's personal physician, who was also given state functions during Daleep Singh's time; the Attariwala family - the father and son Sher Singh and Chattar Singh Attariwala (Sher was Commander in Chief of the Sikh army during the second Anglo-Sikh war of 1848-49); Ajit Singh Sandhawalia who along with Attar and Lehna Singh Sandhawalia mercilessly killed Sher Singh and his son Pratap Singh, only to be killed some days later by Hira Singh, and be cremated with his next victim Dhian Singh; Dhian Singh, who entered Maharaja Ranjit Singh's service as a *gadvaia* (peon)

and rose to become the Chief Minister in Ranjit Singh's court as well as that of Naunehal Singh and Sher Singh; Dina Nath, the Finance Minister, who also signed the first treaty with the British; Dost Mohammed Khan of Kabul who appears in many paintings being feasted by Ranjit Singh; Hira Singh the favourite boy in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court, who could take great liberties with him and even kept sitting in the Maharaja's presence while his own father Dhian Singh remained standing, eventually becoming Chief Minister to Dalip Singh but killed in 1844 at the age of twenty-eight; Sheikh Imam-ud-din, the Governor of Kashmir who tried to create trouble during Gulab Singh's take over and was exposed; Jawahar Singh, the brother of Rani Jindan who eventually killed Hira Singh and became Chief Minister of Rani Jindan, executed by the Sikhs in 1845; Shankar Nath Joshi, the chief astrologer to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who was from Travancore and returned there when the bloodbaths started at Lahore; Jamadar Khushal Singh, who was actually a Brahmin but became a Sikh later and remained a close advisor to Maharaja Ranjit Singh inspite of Dhian Singh's intrigues; Lal Singh, a Brahmin who was Rani Jindan's paramour, who escaped death but was exiled to Benaras; Akali Phoola Singh, a mercurial character, a rebel and an outlaw; Suchet Singh, the younger brother of Dhian Singh, who became chief of the eastern Jammu hills, but later fell out with his own nephew Hira Singh and got killed in March 1844.

In the period after the death of Maharaja Ranjit the chief personality who came out most profitably was Gulab Singh of Jammu. Sitting quietly in the corners of paintings, he always played his cards right at crucial points of history. He later bargained with the British for Kashmir, which he obtained after paying with money obtained from his former ruler Ranjit Singh's treasury. On the death of Naunehal Singh he and his brother Dhian Singh had bargained hard with Sher Singh and Naunehal's mother. In the process Sher Singh got the Lahore throne and the Koh-i-nur diamond, Dhian became chief minister for life, and Gulab Singh struck a fortune and rode away considerably richer. "Sixteen carts were filled with rupees and other silver coins, while 500 horsemen were each entrusted with a bag of gold *mohurs*, and his orderlies were also entrusted with jewelry and other valuable articles. The costly pashminas, and rich wardrobes, and the best horses in Ranjit Singh's stables, were all purloined by Gulab Singh on the occasion of his evacuating Lahore, an event which took place on the night following the cessation of hostilities (Latif)." According to Smyth, "Gulab Singh exercised the most ruthless barbarities, not in the heat of conflict or in the flush of victory only, nor in the rage of an offended sovereign against rebellious subjects; he deliberately committed the most horrible atrocities for the purpose of investing his name with a terror that should keep down all thoughts of resistance to his cruel sway. With all this he was courteous and polite in his demeanour, and exhibited a suavity of manner and language that contrasted fearfully with the real disposition to which it formed an artfully designed but still transparent covering. He would be all things to all men, and displayed a readiness to adapt himself to the circumstances even of the humblest of his subjects that would have won all hearts, had not the tiger-nature that crouched beneath this fair-seeming exterior rendered him an object of distrust and terror."

There were also many interesting foreigners in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court. Dr. Martin Honigberger was from Transylvania and came to India in 1829 as a doctor in the Sikh Army. Maharaja Ranjit Singh initially did not give him full respect but when he cured him from a serious illness in 1839 he was extremely pleased with him and gave him shawls and gold bracelets. He was also made a part of the drama after Naunehal Singh's death when Raja Dhian Singh delayed matters, awaiting the arrival of Raja Sher Singh. Honigberger wrote, "The prince was on his bed, his head most awfully crushed, and his state was such that no hope of his recovery existed. With that conviction I left the tent, and whispered to the minister, in so low a tone that no one else could here it, "Medical art can do nothing to relieve the unfortunate prince"; upon which, the minister requested me to wait there while he re-entered the tent, and, after a short stay therein, he came out, addressing me loud enough to be heard by all the assembly, who listened attentively, asking "whether they might give some soup to the Koonwar Sahib (royal prince), he wishing to have some". Whereupon I answered. "Of course; he is in need only of parsley" - a proverb applied to those dangerously ill, and not expected to live." Honigberger was later dismissed during Hira Singh's time but reappointed by Jawahar Singh. After the collapse of Ranjit Singh's kingdom he was pensioned by the British. Francis Henri Mouton joined Ranjit Singh's cavalry in 1838 and returned to France after fighting for the Sikhs at Firozshah and Sobraon. De la Roche, who joined Ranjit Singh in 1838, was a cavalry commander and also performed some other functions. J.F. Allard was a senior officer under Napoleon Bonaparte and along with Ventura reached Lahore in March 1822, and Ranjit Singh was quick to give these experienced officers employment. Allard looked after the cavalry and lancers, as well as training recruits for Ranjit Singh's army. He returned to France in 1834 and died in 1839 on a visit to Lahore. Before that he had been awarded the Legion of Honour by France and the Bright Star of the Punjab by Ranjit Singh. He had married a Chamba girl who settled down in France. J.B. Ventura was an Italian by birth and experienced army duty in the Battle of Waterloo. Coming to India he joined Ranjit Singh in 1822. After Ranjit Singh's death in 1839 he returned to France leaving behind his wife and fifty female slaves. P.B. Avitabile was an Italian who came to India via Persia in 1827. In addition to army duties he also was given civilian charges. He was discharged from army duty in 1843 and as Aijazuddin writes, "Avitabile retired to Agerola near Naples, his birthplace, and was soon married to a young niece by his scheming relatives, keen on sharing his spoils. Before long, however, the bride and her lawyer paramour were able to accomplish a feat which the fierce Kurds in Persia, the Sikhs in Wazirabad, and the Peshawari Pathans had all admitted was impossible. The ageing General was disposed of silently, it was rumoured, from the combined effects of a poisoned meal and asphyxiation in a gas-filled room. He died in March 1850, aged fifty nine." Foulkes joined Ranjit Singh's army in 1836 and died in service at Mandi in 1841. De

la Font entered Ranjit Singh's service rather late in 1839 and served under General Ventura. H. Steinbach, a Prussian, entered Ranjit Singh's service in 1838 but did not have a very happy tenure and returned to Europe in 1843. H.C. Van Cortlandt joined Ranjit Singh in 1832, was appointed Governor of Dera Ismail Khan and later on joined the British in India, retiring as the Commissioner of Multan. C.A. Court, after serving for Napoleon came to India via Persia. He had a tough time in the chaos which prevailed after Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death. He married a Kashmiri girl whom he took back to France. Court was a scholarly man and was also interested in numismatics and archaeology. All these officers have been portrayed in August Schoefft's classic painting 'The Court of Lahore' and, in his book, Aijazuddin has painstakingly pieced together their itinerant biographies.

The British were intently watching the events at the Lahore court and their 'intelligence reports' also give information of the prevailing state of affairs. Their report of 7th November 1840 mentioned, "This day at 11 A.M. Koonwur Sher Singh arrived by Dak and entered Lahore. Raja Dhian Singh immediately reported the death of Koonwur Nownihal Singh to his mother Ranee Chund Koonwur, and to Sher Singh. When intelligence reached the Ranee, cries and lamentations ensued, and she with the three widows and slave girls of the Koonwur came to the fort, and looked upon her deceased son. A distressing scene ensued. Two of the widows viz., Bhuddourwallee aged 13, and Kuttochwallee aged 15 years cried out that their husband was dead and who would now support them, and that they would burn themselves with his corpse. The Ministers and Koonwur Sheer Singh, tried to dissuade them, and told them they were too young, but in vain. They smiled and desired the ministers and Sheer Singh to desist from such persuasions. The Ministers at last consented. Adorned in their splendid dresses of all colours, while the Ranees themselves looked like beautiful fairies the Koonwur's corpse was carried to the Huzzuree garden near his grand-father's tomb, attended by the two suttees, his mother, and the third widow, daughter of Sham Singh of Attaree, and a concourse of all the servants and Chiefs. It was then placed on the pile, the Bhadour and the Kuttoch Ranees also ascended it, placed the head of the deceased on their knees. The Bhadour Ranee then granted a "Kulghee" or head jewel to the Koonwur Sheer Singh, and both prayed to God for the continuance of the Khalsa Government till the end of the world, and for the happiness of its subjects. The Kuttoch Ranee then advised Raja Dhian Singh to serve Koonwur Sheer Singh with all his heart and soul, and then by permission of the ministers, fire was set to the pile by the Attaree widow. The flames ascended and reduced the Koonwur and the two fairies to ashes. The Pundit suggested the propriety of the observance of the Maharaja's funeral rites by Koonwur Sher Singh, and those of the deceased Koonwur, by his widow of Attaree, and this was permitted by the Ministers. After this melancholy ceremony was over, all went to bathe in the Ravee, and Rannee Chund Koonwur, with Sham Singh's daughter, the widows of the late Maharaja Runjeet Singh, the slave girls, all returned to the Summonboorj with shrieks of lamentation. No words can fully and adequately describe the state of the general mourning in the town. Nothing is to be heard but heart-rending cries. Some persons ascribe these calamities to the violent proceedings of the Koonwur and of Raja Golaub Singh. The one, they say, had ordered a general demolition of Mosques, Thakurdwaras, and Shuheed Gunges, places sacred to the Hindus as well as to the Mahomedans, and the Raja struck off Cheit Singh's head with his own hands, in the presence of Maharaja Khurruck Singh. It is proposed to proclaim the accession of Koonwar Sheer Singh to the Khalsa Guddee, in the city of Lahore this evening." The official British statement, issued by 'T.H. Maddock, Secretary to Government of India' on 18 November 1840 at Fort William, was more laconic. "Official information having been received of the untimely demise on the 6th Instant of the late Prince Nao Nehal Singh, heir to the Lahore sovereignty, from the effects of an accident sustained while issuing from the palace at Lahore for the performance of the funeral obsequies and the ceremonial of accession to the throne of his father the late Maharajah Khurruck Singh, the Governor General of India in Council in testimony of his sympathy in a calamity so deeply affecting a family with which the British Government has long been bound in close alliance is pleased to direct that the honors due to the memory of a reigning Prince shall be rendered on this melancholy occasion. Twenty-two minute guns corresponding with what is believed to have been the number of the years of the late Prince's age will accordingly be fired on this date from the ramparts of Fort William."

Ranjit Singh held his court together through a system of personal loyalties and a strong hand, though he was not a cruel despot. Such was his authority that even during his crippling paralysis towards the end of his life the affairs of the state ran effortlessly in his name. Once he died, in 1839, there was considerable anarchy for a decade till his empire finally collapsed. There were a series of intrigues, deaths and murders which wiped out the leading figures. Sher Singh, Dhian Singh and Pratap Singh were brutally murdered by Ajit Singh Sandhawalia in September 1843, who in turn was killed by Hira Singh a few days later; Hira Singh was killed in September 1844; Jawahar Singh, the brother of Rani Jindan, was executed by the Sikh army in September 1844; Rani Jindan was exiled by the British in August 1847 and, perhaps, if she had been restrained some years earlier from imposing her intrigues on the Sikh kingdom its history might have been different. Prior to his death Kharak Singh had been deposed by his own son Naunehal Singh in October 1839. With the collapse of the Lahore court in 1849 and the anarchy that had gripped it in its last decade, and its coming under direct British rule, a semblance of tranquillity descended on Punjab till the next upheaval, which was the Mutiny of 1857. Ironically, the sketches made by European artists like Emily Eden and August Schoefft were converted into lithographs and paintings and reached Punjab after the deaths of their subjects. In fact when Schoefft first reached Punjab in 1841 he had already missed out on Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Kharak Singh and Naunehal Singh, who had already passed into history. Emily Eden's 'Portraits of the Princes and People of India' was

published in 1844, August Schoefft's' famous painting 'The Court of Lahore' was finished much after 1850. Even Osborne's book 'The Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh' was published after the Maharaja died. Soltykoff's magnificent images were published in 1858. The European artists, therefore, did not have an immediate effect on the preferences of the Lahore court though instances are recorded of their making and presenting some paintings to their subjects during their visits. The last Maharaja, Dalip Singh, was fortunate to have been portrayed in all mediums - miniatures, water colours, oils, photographs, and was even sketched by Queen Victoria herself, whose favourite he was. Comparing his initial miniature paintings with the photographs it appears that the painters' efforts were quite realistic. There was often a caricature effect in the paintings. For example, the painters accentuated Daleep Singh's large, sad, eyes, Hira Singh's wiryness, Sher Singh's grace and vitality, Kharak Singh's weaknesses, the wiliness of the twin-thumbed Dhian Singh and his brother Gulab Singh. Daleep Singh in particular became the icon of nostalgia and Aijazuddin succinctly sums up his predicament. "Dalip Singh's life was not his fault. History condemned him to a role in Punjabi politics that he was neither old enough nor competent enough to turn to his lasting advantage; his fellow Sikhs converted him into a symbolic sceptre of power; his mother alternately used and abused him; the British professed a fiduciary and paternal responsibility before betraying him; his adopted religion failed his expectations by rendering him in the ultimate analysis unacceptable to his Christian equals; and finally his immature vacillation and reconversion destroyed the remnants of a frayed self-respect."

The paintings of that era, read with accounts of those times give a fairly accurate picture of their subjects. Moorcroft, a veterinarian, was one of the earliest travellers to Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court, in 1820. Of the time spent by him with the Maharaja he wrote: "On the evening of the 8th of May the Hakim came to conduct me to the presence of Ranjit Singh. Having passed through one of the western gates of the fort, we crossed the garden, in which stands the Jama Masjid, or principal mosque. Thence a long flight of brick steps led to a second gateway and court, crossing which we came to a third gate that opened into a more spacious enclosure, in which stood a number of horses caparisoned. From this we entered a large court flagged with marble, and on the side opposite the entrance was an open apartment, in which the Maharaja was seated. Upon my approach he partly rose from his chair, which was of gold, and pointed to another, of silver, opposite to him, for me to sit down upon. His courtiers sat upon the carpet on either side, forming a lane from his chair to mine. The gateways were well guarded, but here were only two matchlock men, sitting one on either hand of the Raja. After the ordinary inquiries I expressed my thanks to him for the attentions I had received since entering his territories, and requested leave to offer the few trifles I had brought for his acceptance. These were a pair of double-barrelled, and a pair of three barreled pistols, a sword, and the model of a cannon, with carriage and all appurtenances complete. This miniature piece of ordnance was made by Mr. Donnithorne, the mint master at Farokhabad, and was of singularly beautiful execution. To these I added some white *chowri* tails and bags of musk from the mountains. Ranjit was much pleased with the pistols, and still more with the cannon. Entering upon the main purpose of my travels, that of procuring horses, he ordered some of his to be exhibited, and about fifty were passed in review. They had all rich bridles, saddles, and housings, and were of the breeds of Dhani and Ghep, forest districts in the Punjab, the Lakhi, Jangal, Rohtas, Atak, Kabul and Bokhara. One which had cost 1700 rupees at Bokhara was beautifully made except in the legs below the knees and hocks, where he was too slight. For a grey Persian horse the Raja told me he had given 7000 rupees, but it struck me as inferior to most of those exhibited. After the horses had been fully inspected I took my leave. Early on the following morning the Hakim came and took me to Ranjit, who wished me to see his horses exercised. I found him in a neighbouring garden seated on a chair under an awning without any guards, his courtiers sitting round him on carpets. When I was seated, fifty horses, different from those I had before seen, were brought forward. The space on which they were exercised was a garden-walk twelve feet broad. The rider (for only one was employed) mounted each horse in succession, and sometimes walked a few paces; but in general urged him at once into a short and high gallop, in which the fore action was very high, the hind low and quick. This was continued with great rapidity for a few yards, when the horse was suddenly turned on his haunches, and the same movements were repeated, or they were sometimes broken by rapid side movements in most perfect obedience to the action of the body and the hand. Not a single horse neighed, or was restive or vicious in the slightest degree, or was uneasy at mounting, or diverged from the path, although the Raja affirmed that they had not been ridden for some time past.....On the 10th I was present upon the Raja's invitation at the parade of two regiments which he had formed on the model of the Company's *sipahis*. The men were Sikhs, Hindustanis, and Gorkhas; the first were in general tall well-looking men; the second were of a mixed appearance; the last generally short but muscular. The Raja beheld them from the top of a low building at the palace, where I joined him. He seemed to take great interest in his regular battalions, but they are not popular amongst his officers. Desa Singh told Izzet Ullah that all Ranjit's conquests had been won by the sword, and he had never known the infantry and artillery of any service. The Raja told me that these regiments had been first trained by a Naik, who had deserted from the Company's service. He was very communicative. After the review he showed me some more of his horses, chiefly from Bokhara; and then consulted me on the state of his health, complaining much that he could not bear such strong potations as he had been used to do formerly; he told me also that he had once sent an account of his ailments to General Ochterlony, that a European surgeon might prescribe for him, and that he had in consequence received some medicines, but had never taken any of them. These were afterwards sent to me, and finding one of them to be elixir of vitriol, I mixed a few drops with water, and drank it in the presence of the Hakim, in order to remove any suspicion that might lurk in a mind so constituted as that of Ranjit appears to be. After I left him I received a message that

I was at liberty to visit any part of Lahore, whenever and in what way I pleased, and desiring me to name what breed of horse I preferred, that the Raja might give me one. I returned due thanks for the Raja's kindness, but declined accepting the horse, at least until I should return from Bokhara.....During the other days of my stay at Lahore, I had several interviews with the Raja, in all of which he conversed with the apparent absence of all reserve upon a variety of topics. One of his favourite themes was his stud. He told me that most of his horses were presents from his tributaries and *zamindars*, and that he not infrequently requited the donor of a superior animal with a village or a *jaghir*; no wonder, therefore, that he is not singular, however, in his passion. Every Sikh in the country keeps a horse and a brood mare, and rears colts for his own riding or for sale. The Raja monopolizes the best; for in the party which escorted me from Jindiala there was only one good horse. Ranjit proposed to me, through Mir Izzet Ullah, to purchase some horses for him at Bokhara, and I readily assented; but there was some difficulty as to the model, and the matter ended by my stating, that if he would be contented with but one, he should select it from the string I hoped to bring down.....The Raja consulted me also confidentially, regarding his health, which appeared to me to have suffered chiefly from intemperance and excess. On my departure I left a paper of remarks and instructions, which I heard was canvassed by a conclave of native doctors, and was honoured with their concurrence. In all probability it was but little attended to by Ranjit in practice.....Ranjit conversed also freely upon his military arrangements, and upon his past exploits. He told me that he lost 1900 men in a few hours, in an attempt to carry the city of Multan by escalade, owing to its having been made whilst he was absent. The gates had been blown open, but strong mounds of earth had been reared behind them. The garrison amounted to 3000 men, the besiegers to 25,000; but the former were all Pathans, and 'fought with one hand'. In answer to the question I put, how many survived the capture of the fort, he said 500, on which Himmel Sinh, a favourite courtier, guessing the drift of my inquiry, which was to ascertain the truth of the report that they had all been put to death immediately, remarked that not a man was killed after the fort surrendered. Speaking of the wealth of the city, the Raja said it was estimated at four crores, on which Himmel Sinh observed that the Sikh officers did not attempt to restrain the soldiers from plunder, on account of the opposition that had been offered, and the loss sustained; and the Raja stated that very little of the booty had come to his share. Neither the Raja nor Himmel Sinh mentioned the severe captivity to which the gallant but unfortunate Nawab Sirafraz Khan is now subject at Lahore. The Nawab Mozaffer Khan was killed in the storm with two of his sons. Sirafraz Khan was a third son. Although the troops plundered the city, they were compelled to relinquish their booty to the Raja, and the most valuable part came to the public treasury.....Early on the morning of the 13th I had my audience of leave. The Maharaja was peculiarly communicative and familiar. He told me that when Lord Lake entered the Panjab in pursuit of Holkar, he felt a strong desire to see the European general and his officers. His courtiers endeavored to dissuade him, affirming that the very sight would be unlucky; but he was determined to gratify himself, and for that purpose disguised himself as a common trooper, and accompanied by a party of his soldiers, repaired to the British camp. They went to Mr. Metcalfe's tent, and sent word that some Sikhs had come out of curiosity to see the Sahibs, and begged he would indulge them. He immediately complied with their desire, but soon distinguished Ranjit Sinh amongst his visitors..... After many assurances of kindness towards me, and of friendship for the Company, he dismissed me with an honorary dress of valuable shawls, and similar distinctions of less value to Mir Izzet Ullah, and his son and brother. I had submitted to Ranjit Sinh a proposal to establish a fixed scale of duties for the admission of British merchandise into his territories, but he postponed the consideration of the arrangement until the return of his principal officers from the campaign in which they were now engaged, as he said he wished first to consult them upon the subject. This, however, I consider as an adjournment *sine die*. He readily consented to my proceeding through Mundi and Kulu to Ladakh, and in case of my being unable to reach Bokhara from Upper Tibet, I had his authority to pass through Kashmir with two hundred followers. He appointed Miri Mal to attend to me till Kulu, and furnished me with written orders to his officers to afford every facility to my journey.....In the evening Nur-ad-din, the Governor, came to conduct me through the city. Lahore is surrounded by a brick wall about thirty feet high, which extends for about seven miles, and is continuous with the Fort. The latter, in which the Raja resides, is surrounded by a wall of no great strength, with loop-holes for musketry; a branch of the Ravi washes the foot of its northern face, but it has no moat on either of the remaining sides. The palace within this enclosure, called the Saman Burj, which is of many stories, is entirely faced with a kind of porcelain enamel, on which processions and combats of men and animals are depicted. Many of these are as perfect as when first placed in the wall. Several of the old buildings are in ruins, others are entire, and throw into shade the meaner structures of more recent date. Ranjit Sinh has cleared away some of the rubbish, and has repaired or refitted some of the ruined buildings of Jehangir and Shah-jehan; but his alterations have not always been made with good feeling or taste. The great square and buildings of the principal mosque have been converted into a place of exercise for his *sipahi* infantry, and he has stripped the dome of the mausoleum of Asof Jah, the brother of Nurjehan Begam, of its white marbles, to apply them to the erection of some insignificant apartments in the garden-court of the Mosque. The Diwan Am, or general hall of audience, is a long apartment supported by many pillars. The Diwan Khas, or private audience-hall, is a suite of small chambers offering nothing remarkable. Lahore is said to have been twelve kos in circumference, and however this may have been, it is clear, from the ruins of buildings beyond the walls, that it was once much more extensive than it is at present. Such of it as still remains within the walls is apparently very populous. The streets were crowded to an extent beyond anything I have ever witnessed in an Indian city. The houses were in general of brick, and five stories high, but many were in a very crazy condition. The Bazaar follows the direction of the city wall, and is not far distant from it. The street is narrow, and this inconvenience is aggravated by platforms in front of the shops, on which the goods are displayed under projecting pent-houses of straw to protect them from the sun and rain. Through the centre of the remaining

contracted space runs a deep and dirty drain, the smell from which was very offensive. The population consists of Mohammedans, Hindus, and Sikhs, the former in the greatest number. I saw no building of any size or magnificence, except the mosque of the Nawab Wazir Khan. The wall of the city was still under repair, and 3000 men were said to be at work upon it and upon the moat which the Raja was about to add to the defenses. The place, however, could oppose no effectual resistance to European assailants." Moorcroft went on to the hills and also left an authentic account of the court of Sansar Chand, the greatest patron of Kangra painting.

William Osborne was A.D.C. to the Governor-General, Lord Auckland. During his stay in India he could spend some time in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court and wrote an interesting record about the time he spent with him, shortly before he died. In his book, 'The Court and Camp of Runjeet Singh', he gives insights into Ranjit Singh's exceptional character. Osborne first saw him "Cross-legged in a golden chair, dressed in simple white, wearing no ornaments but a single string of enormous pearls round the waist, and the celebrated Koh-i-nur, or mountain of light, on his arm - the jewel rivalled, if not surpassed, in brilliancy by the glance of fire which every now and then shot from his single eye as it wandered restlessly round the circle - sat the Lion of Lahore.....The more I see of Runjeet Singh, the more he strikes me as an extraordinary man. Cunning and distrustful himself, he has succeeded in inspiring his followers with a strong and devoted attachment to his person; with a quick talent at reading men's minds, he is equally adept at concealing his own; and it is curious to see the sort of quiet indifference with which he listens to the absurd reports of his own motives and actions which are daily poured into his ears at the Durbar, without giving any opinion of his own, and without rendering it possible to guess what his final decision on any subject will be, till the moment for action has arrived. Though he is by profession a Sikh, in religion he is in reality a sceptic, and it is difficult to say whether his superstition is real, or only a mask assumed to gratify and conciliate his people. He is mild and merciful as a ruler, but faithless and deceitful; perfectly uneducated, unable even to read or write, he has by his own natural and unassisted intellect raised himself from the situation of a private individual to that of a despotic monarch over a turbulent and powerful nation. By sheer force of mind, personal energy and courage (though at the commencement of his career he was feared and detested rather than loved), he has established his throne on a firmer foundation than that of any other eastern sovereign, and but for other watchful jealousy of the British government, would long ere have added Scinde, if not Afghanistan, to his present kingdom. Ill-looking as he undoubtedly is, the countenance of Runjeet Sing cannot fail to strike everyone as that of a very extraordinary man; and though at first his appearance gives rise to a disagreeable feeling almost amounting to disgust, a second look shows so much intelligence, and the restless wandering of his single fiery eye excites so much interest, that you get accustomed to his plainness, and are forced to confess that there is no common degree of intellect and acuteness developed in his countenance."

Osborne also had the opportunity to record about Maharaja Ranjit Singh's lively banquets. "On my return home, I met the Maharajah taking his usual ride. He was very inquisitive as to where I had been, and I never saw him in so good a humour or such high spirits. After a good deal of gossip upon various subjects, he said, "You have never been at one of my drinking parties; it is bad work drinking now as the weather is so hot; but as soon as we have a good rainy day, we will have one." I sincerely hope it will not rain at all during our stay, for, from all accounts, nothing can be such a nuisance as one of these parties. His wine is extracted from raisins, with a quantity of pearls ground to powder, and mixed with it, for no other reason (that I can hear) than to add to the expense of it. It is made for himself alone, and though he sometimes gives a few bottles to some of his favourite chiefs, it is very difficult to be procured, even at the enormous price of one gold mohur for a small bottle. It is as strong as aquafortis, and as at his parties he always helps you himself, it is no easy matter to avoid excess. He generally, on these occasions, has two or three Hebes in the shape of the prettiest of his Cachemirian girls to attend upon himself and guests, and gives way to every species of licentious debauchery. He fell violently in love with one of these fair cup-bearers about two years ago, and actually married her, after parading her on a pillion before himself on horseback, through the camp and city, for two or three days, to the great disgust of all his people. The only food allowed to you at these drinking bouts are fat quails stuffed with all sorts of spices, and the only thing to allay your thirst, naturally consequent upon eating such heating food, is this abominable liquid fire. Runjeet himself laughs at our wines, and says that he drinks for excitement, and that the sooner that object is attained the better. Of all the wines we brought with us as a present to him from the Governor-General, consisting of port, claret, hock, champagne, etc., the whiskey was the only thing he liked. During these potations he generally orders the attendance of all his dancing girls, whom he forces to drink his wine, and when he thinks them sufficiently excited, uses all his power to set them by the ears, the result of which is a general action, in the course of which they tear one another almost to pieces. They pull one another's nose and earrings by main force, and sometimes even more serious accidents occur; Runjeet sitting by encouraging them with the greatest delight, and exclaiming to his guests, "*Burra tomacha, burra tomacha*" (great fun)."

Osborne was greatly impressed with Pratap Singh, the young son of Sher Singh, who even at a tender age once escorted him. "Pertaub Singh was handsomely dressed, armed with a small ornamented shield, sword, and matchlock, all in miniature, covered with jewels, and escorted by a small party of Sikh cavalry and some guns. His horse was naturally of a white colour, but dyed with henna to a deep scarlet. He is one of the most intelligent boys I ever met with, very good

looking, with singularly large and expressive eyes. His manners are in the highest degree attractive, polished, and gentleman-like, and totally free from all the *mauvaise bonte* and awkwardness generally found in European children of that age. He is young and a very interesting friend. He expressed his thanks in graceful terms on receiving my present of a gold watch and a chain, and on parting said "You may tell Lord Auckland that the British Government will always find a friend in the son of Sher Sing." Then, mounting his horse covered with plumes and jewels, he gracefully raised his hand to his forehead and galloped off with his escort, curvetting and caracoling round him in circles till he was out of sight." At that time he was only eight years of age! In Emily Eden's lithograph he indeed looks like a bright child.

Two years later, introducing his journal which was published after Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death, he critically wrote about Maharaja Ranjit Singh: "Brought up but not educated in the idleness and debauchery of a zenana, by the pernicious influence of which it is marvellous that the stoutest mind should not be emasculated, he appears from the moment he assumed the reins of government to have evinced a vigour of understanding on which his habitual excesses, prematurely fatal as they proved to his bodily powers, produced no sensible effect. His was one of that order of minds which is destined by nature to win their way to distinction and achieve greatness. His courage was of that cool and calculating sort, which courted no unnecessary danger, and shunned none which his purposes made it expedient to encounter; and he always observed a just proportion between his efforts and his objects. Gifted with an intuitive perception of character, and a comprehensive knowledge of human nature, it was by the overruling influence of a superior mind, that he contrived gradually, almost insensibly, and with little resistance, not only to reduce the proud and high-spirited chiefs of his nation to the condition of subjects, but to render them the devoted adherents of his person, and the firm supporters of his throne. With an accurate and retentive memory, and with great fertility both of invention and resources, he was an excellent man of business without being able to write or even to read. As insensible to remorse and pity as indisposed to cruelty and the shedding of blood, he cared neither for the happiness or lives of others, except as far as either might be concerned in the obstruction or advancement of his projects, from the steady pursuit of which no consideration ever diverted him. His success, and especially the consolidation of his power, are in great measure attributable to the soundness of his views, and the practicable nature of his plans. He never exhausted his strength in wild and hazardous enterprises, but restraining his ambition within the limits of a reasonable probability, they were not only so well timed and skillfully arranged as generally to ensure success, but failure (in the rare instances when they did fail) never seriously shook his stability, or impaired his resources. He seems to have had a lively, fanciful, and ingenuous mind, but the ceremonious forms of Indian etiquette and the figurative and hyperbolical style of Oriental intercourse, are not favourable to the development of social qualities. Runjeet, however, had a natural shrewdness, sprightliness and vivacity, worthy of a more civilized and intellectual state. He was a devout believer in the doctrines, and a punctual observer of the ceremonies of his religion. The Grunth, the sacred book of the Sikhs, was constantly read to him, and he must have been familiar with the moral precepts it inculcated. But nothing could be more different than the precepts of Nanak and the practices of Runjeet. By the former were enjoined devotion to God and peace towards men. The life of Runjeet was an incessant career of war and strife and he indulged without remorse or shame in sensualities of the most revolting description. Nor did the excesses over which he was at no pains to throw a decent veil either detract from his dignity or diminish the respect of his subjects; so depraved was the taste and so low the state of moral sentiment in the Punjab. It is no impeachment of the sagacity of Runjeet that he was a believer in omens and charms, in witchcraft and in spells. Such superstitions only prove that early impressions were not eradicated and that his mind did not make a miraculous spring beyond the bounds of his country and his age."

Vigne, a geologist, sketched Maharaja Ranjit Singh and wrote about him, "The diminutive size of his person, and the comparative simplicity of his attire - consisting of a turban, usually large only over the forehead, with the end hanging down the back, folded a la Sikh; a kind of frock or tunic, padded so as to give an extraordinary breadth to his naturally wide shoulders; the *kumerbund* tied round his waist; and pair of close-fitting trousers, of the same colour, yellow or pea-green; and all of Kashmirian manufacture - did not prevent anyone, who entered the Durbar for the first time, from instantly recognizing the Maharajah. The contour of his face was square; his complexion was a light olive, his forehead was wide and Napoleon-like: his right and only eye, large and prominent, for he had lost the other by the smallpox, with which he was slightly marked, was incessantly roving; his nostrils expanded and contracted, as his conversation became animated; and decision and energy were pre-eminently imprinted on his thick but well-formed lips. A grey moustache, blending with his white beard, added character to the very expressive countenance of this extraordinary man."

Baron Hugel, an Austrian traveller, also visited Ranjit Singh's court during his later years, when he was partially paralysed. "I must call him the most ugly and unprepossessing man I saw throughout the Punjab. His left eye, which is quite closed, disfigures him less than the other, which is always rolling about, wide open, and is much distorted by disease. The scars of the smallpox on his face do not run into one another, but form so many dark pits in his greyish-brown skin, his short straight nose is swollen at the tip and his head, which is sunk every much on his broad shoulders, is too large for his height and does not seem to move easily. He has a thick muscular neck, thin arms and legs, the left foot and the left arm dropping, and small well-formed hands. He will sometimes hold a

stranger's hand fast within his own for half an hour, and the nervous irritation of his mind is shown by the continued pressure on one's fingers. His costume always contributes to increase his ugliness, being in winter the colour of gamboge. When he seats himself in a common English armchair, with his feet drawn under him, the position is one particularly unfavourable to him; but as soon as he mounts his horse, and with his black shield at his back, puts him on his mettle, his whole form seems animated by the spirit within, and assumes a certain grace, of which nobody could believe it susceptible. In spite of the paralysis affecting one side, he manages his horse with the greatest ease. If nature has been niggardly to him in respect of personal appearance, she has recompensed him very richly by the power which he exercises over everyone who approaches him. He can in a moment take up a subject of conversation, follow it up closely by questions and answers, which convey other questions in themselves, and these are always so exactly to the purpose, that they put the understanding of his respondent to the test. With a voice naturally rough and unpleasant, he can assume a tone of much fascination whenever he wishes to flatter; and his influence over the people of northern India amounts to something like enchantment."

As can be seen, Ranjit Singh excited extreme feelings and emotions in all European travellers who met him. They either liked or hated him, but invariably respected his achievements. Burnes wrote about him in 1832: "Nature has, indeed, been sparing in her gifts to this personage; and there must be a mighty contrast between his mind and body. He has lost an eye, is pitted by the small pox, and his stature does not certainly exceed five feet three inches. He is entirely free from pomp and show, yet the studied respect of his court is remarkable; not an individual spoke without a sign, though the throng was more like a bazaar than the court of the first native Prince in these times.....A conversation could not, of course, conclude without his favourite topic of wine; and, as he first sat down, he remarked that the site of his tent was an agreeable one for a drinking party, since it commanded a fine view of the surrounding country. He enquired of the doctors, whether wine was best before or after food; and laughed heartily at an answer from myself, when I recommended both." Burnes also witnessed the celebrations of the Basant festival at Ranjit Singh's court and found them impressive. "The troops of the Punjab were drawn out, forming a street of about two miles long, which it took upwards of thirty-five minutes to traverse. The army consisted entirely of regular troops - cavalry, infantry, and artillery; and the whole corps was uniformly dressed in yellow, which was the gala costume of this Carnival. The Maharaja passed down the line, and received the salute of his forces. Our road lay entirely through the ruins of old Lahore, over irregular ground, which gave the line a waving appearance that greatly heightened the beauty of the scene. At the end of this magnificent array stood the royal tents, lined with yellow silk. Among them was a canopy, valued at a lac of rupees, covered with pearls, and having a border of precious stones. Nothing can be imagined more grand. At one end Runjet took his seat, and heard the Grunth, or sacred volume of the Seiks, for about ten minutes. He made a present to the priest; and the holy book was borne away wrapped in ten different covers, the outside one of which, in honour of the day, was of yellow velvet. Flowers and fruits were then placed before his Highness; and every kind of shrub or tree that produced a yellow flower must have been shorn of its beauties on this day."

Emily Eden got on well with Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1838 and along with sketching him wrote in her book: "Another of Runjeet's topics was his constant praise of drinking, and he said he understood that there were books which contained objections to drunkenness, and he thought it better that there should be no books at all, than that they should contain such foolish notions. He is a very drunken old profligate, neither more nor less. Still he has made himself a great king; he has conquered a great many powerful enemies; he is remarkably just in his government; he has disciplined a large army; he hardly ever takes away life, which is wonderful in a despot; and he is excessively beloved by his people. I certainly should not guess any part of this from looking at him. He retained a perfect simplicity or rather plainness of appearance, while his chiefs and courtiers around him wore the most brilliant draperies and a rich profusion of jewels. His manners were always quiet.....He had a curious and constant trick, while sitting and engaged in conversation, of raising one of his legs under him on the chair, which he used in compliance with the customs of his European visitors, and then pulling off the stocking from that foot. He had the use only of one eye, which age and a hard life of exposure and excesses had dimmed at the period now spoken of, but it still retained the traces of the vigour and penetration for which he was remarkable." Of Sher Singh and his son Pratap Singh she recounted, "To our horror, Shere Singh offered himself again for dinner yesterday. We had four strange officers as it was, and this promised to be an awful dinner; but it turned out very well. He brought his little boy, Pertab Singh, seven years old, with eyes as big as saucers, and emeralds bigger than his eyes; and he is such a dear good child! G. gave the little boy a box containing an ornamented pistol, with all sorts of contrivances for making bullets, all of which Pertab knew how to use. We accused Shere Singh of having taken a watch that had been given to his little boy; and he pretended to put this pistol in his sash, and it was very pretty to see the little fellow's appeal to G.; but in the middle of it all, he turned round to his father and said - "But you know, Maharaj Gee (your Highness), what is yours is mine, and what is mine is yours; I will lend it to you whenever you like." Shere Singh thought the child was talking too much at one time, and made him a sign, upon which the boy sunk down in the eastern fashion, with his legs crossed and his hands clasped, and he fixed his eyes like a statue. None of us could make him look or hear, and we asked his father at last to let him play, as we were used to children at home. He said one word, and the way in which Pertab jumped up was just like a statue coming to life."

Jacquemont, a French botanist and traveller was in Punjab for three years (1829-32) and met Maharaja Ranjit Singh a number of times. "He is a thin little man with an attractive face, though he has lost an eye from smallpox which has otherwise disfigured him little. His right eye, which remains, is very large, his nose is fine and slightly turned up, his mouth firm, his teeth excellent. He wears slight moustaches which he twists incessantly with his finger and a long thin white beard which falls to his chest. His expression shows nobility of thought, shrewdness and the biography of Ranjit Singh might possibly be amusing but it abounds in facts impossible to write down in the vernacular, which would require to be put in Latin notes. Yet in spite of all that is reprehensible in Ranjit, do love him a little for my sake. I have spent a couple of hours on several occasions and his conversation is a nightmare. He is almost the first inquisitive Indian I have seen, but his curiosity makes up for the apathy of his whole nation. He asked me a hundred thousand questions about India, the English, Europe, Bonaparte, this world in general and the other one, hell and paradise, the soul, God, the devil, and a thousand things besides. Like all persons of quality in the East he is a *malade imaginaire*, and since he has a large band of the liveliest girls of Kashmir and sufficient means to pay for a better dinner than anybody else in this country, he is particularly annoyed at not being able to drink like a fish without getting drunk, or eat like an elephant without choking. Women no longer give him any more pleasure than the flowers in his garden, and for good reasons, and that is the most cruel of his ills. He had the decency to refer to those functions of whose weakness he complains as his digestion. But I know what the word stomach signified in the mouth of the King of Lahore, and we discussed his malady exhaustively, though in veiled terms.....This model Asiatic king is no saint: far from it. He cares nothing for law or good faith, unless it is to his interest to be just or faithful; but he is not cruel. He orders very great criminals to have their noses and ears cut off, or a hand, but he never takes life. He has a passion for horses which amounts almost to a mania; he has waged the most costly and bloody wars for the purpose of seizing a horse in some neighbouring State which they had refused to give or sell him. He is extremely brave, a quality rather rare among Eastern princes, and though he has always been successful in his military campaigns, it has been by treaties and cunning negotiations that he has made himself absolute king of the whole Punjab, Kashmir, etc. and is better obeyed by his subjects than the Mogul emperors were at the height of their power. A professing Sikh, though in reality a sceptic, he goes to Amritsar every year to perform his devotions, and, oddly enough, visits the tombs of various Moslem saints as well; yet these pilgrimages do not upset any of his more strait-laced co-religionists.....One knows that Orientals are debauched; but they have some shame about it. Ranjit's excesses are shameless. The fact that this greybeard has had and has a number of catamites is nothing shocking in this country; but, apart from this, he has always consorted publicly with the women of the bazaar, whose patron and protector he is. At the great festivals there are hundreds of them at Lahore and Amritsar, whom he makes dress up in the most ridiculous way, ride on horses and follow him; on such occasions they form his bodyguard. He always has some of them in his camp, and they follow him everywhere riding upon his elephants. One of his pastimes when he has nothing better to do is to watch their flirtations with the young men of his court."

Jaquemont also had this to say of the Nihang Sikhs, whom he saw on his visit to the Golden Temple at Amritsar. "The Akalis, or Immortals, are properly speaking Sikh faqirs. Their rule compels them to be dressed in blue and always to carry arms. The sacred pool at Amritsar is their headquarters, but they often spread themselves over the Punjab in large and formidable parties. Ranjit wisely turns their ferocity to his own advantage. He enlists them in his armies, and employs them, preferably against his Mussalman enemies. He has at the moment about 4,000-5,000 of them in the army which he maintains at Attock, ready to march against another fanatic, the Syed. I have only seen two of them in the streets of Amritsar; it was evening and their arms glittered in the light of the torches and the matches of their muskets hung ready lighted. I had never seen more sinister-looking figures. After Amritsar their favourite headquarters is Lahore. One sees them chiefly on the outskirts of the city among the ruins of the Mughal palaces and mosques. This is their lair. Nearly all of them are mounted on ponies and armed with a spear or matchlock, others have only a bow or a sword. They are dressed in tattered blue clothes and most of them wear a long pointed head-dress of the same colour, surrounded at its base with a polished steel ring like the brim of a hat. They are hideous to behold. They live on what they can take if it is not given to them, and hurl insults at those whom they dare not plunder. M. Allard, who has wisely made them friendly by his liberality, has nevertheless on one occasion been attacked by them. Sometimes they collect in parties of hundred and mingle among the Rajah's attendants, and when they think themselves strong enough, they threaten him and demand money. They have more than once held him up to ransom in this way, but Ranjit has never ventured to take vigorous measures and gives a general order to put them in positions from which they have little chance of returning, and they usually come back in smaller numbers for they fight with desperate courage." Jaquemont's views were corroborated by Steinbach. "In addition to the regular and irregular army, the Lahore government also has in its pay a body of irregular cavalry (to the number of between two and three thousand) called Akalees. They are religious fanatics, who acknowledge no ruler or laws except their own. They move about constantly armed to the teeth, insulting particularly Europeans, and it is not an uncommon thing to see them riding about with a drawn sword in each hand, two more in their belt, a matchlock at their back, and three or four quoits fastened round their turbans. The quoit is an arm peculiar to this race of people. It is a steel ring, varying from six to nine inches in diameter, and about an inch in breadth, very thin, and the edges ground very sharp. They throw it with more force than dexterity; but not so (as alleged) as to be able to lop off a limb at sixty or eighty yards. In general, the bystanders are in greater danger than the object aimed at. Runjeet Singh did much towards reducing this race of people to a state of subjection, but he only partially succeeded. They fight with desperation, and are always employed on the most dangerous service."

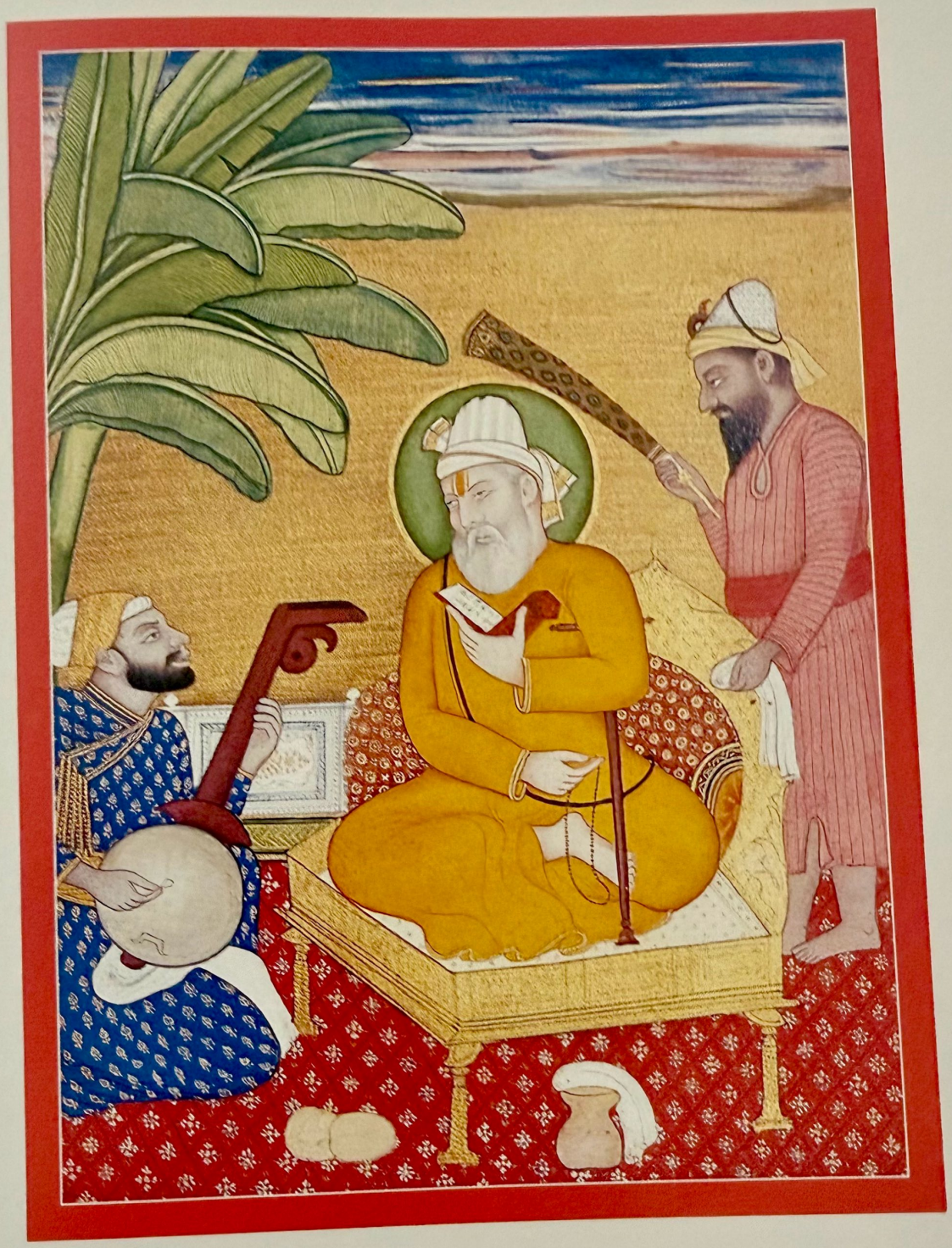
An impartial assessment of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) clearly brings out his great qualities. He converted a lawless region into an orderly and great kingdom - from the Sutlej (almost reaching Simla) including Ladakh, Peshawar, Multan, till the Khyber Pass and Sind. He used force only sufficient to meet his requirements of maintaining power, and occasionally to obtain a horse that he took a liking to. (It is said that the campaign to get the horse Laili, apart from other objectives, cost him twelve hundred men and sixty lakh rupees). He abolished capital punishment and the smaller abuses and requirements of maintaining power were less gruesome in degree than the total lawlessness that was prevailing before his time. Uneducated and illiterate, he was also a man of the arts though he did not encourage his own paintings, perhaps because of his blind eye and smallpox marks. With great persuasion he sat for a sketch by Vigne, but even then, "He was constantly turning away, so as to conceal his blind eye." Many paintings exist depicting him in his later years but not surprisingly there are hardly any showing him in his youth, which confirms the fact that painting came to the Lahore court after the subjugation of the Kangra hill states. He died a monarch and his authority was not diminished even in his later years when he was paralyzed. He also used to adopt the children of his slain generals and looked after their welfare. "Emily Eden first noticed them with Ranjit Singh and observed that 'he always has these children with him, and has married them to each other. They were crawling about the floor, and running in and out between Runjeet and G., and at one time the little boy had got his arm twisted around G.'s leg.' To an unmarried forty one year old spinster (and a Victorian one at that) these children violated the primary rule by being not only seen but also heard and felt. Seeing them again when calling on Ranjit Singh some days later she bristled with irritation at their behaviour and that of their bibulous guardian: 'Those two little brats, in new dresses, were crawling about the floor, and he poured some of this fire down their throats'. Schoefft believed that they received half their fathers' income until they reached the age of fifteen, and if still alive after Ranjit Singh's questionable supervision beyond that age, they were entitled to the whole revenue. (Aijazuddin)."

With the collapse of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's kingdom, the art of traditional painting disappeared from Lahore and Amritsar but continued in the other British protected Sikh states like Patiala, Kapurthala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot and smaller places like Una. In fact, with the peaceful conditions encountered by these states under the patronage of the British, indulgence in the arts and court leisure activities increased considerably. The Lahore court artists soon migrated there and evidence exists of artists reaching there directly from Delhi and even Rajasthan (the Hindu mythological paintings at Sheesh Mahal, Patiala, give it the air of a Hindu palace). It has been one of the biggest ironies of princely India that the rajas and maharajas could build majestic palaces to mark their greatness only when they were subjugated by the British. When they were actually independent and fighting they could not afford to do so, in terms of time or finances. Similarly in painting, once the princes were free from guarding their borders they hired the best artists in Europe to paint their portraits in majestic postures. The periods of rule of the various Maharajas was limited only by their state of health, given the excesses they could indulge in. One Sikh maharaja 'ruled' thus for seventy-five years, just before the independence of the country. Actually, even a much lesser period of independent rule by any maharaja would have been more eventful, and there was to be no comparison with the powerful reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The British added to the drama by giving exalted titles to the Rajas and Princes. The title of Raja of Jind, for example, read "His Highness Raja-i-Rajagan, Raja Raghbir Singh Bahadur, Grand Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, Companion of the Indian Empire, Farzand-i-Dilband, Rasik-ul-Itikad-daulat Inglishia, Councillor of the Empress of India, Chief of Jind". Similarly, the Raja of Faridkot was called "His Highness Brij Inder Singh Bahadur Barar Bans, Farzand-i-Sa'adat-i-Nishan-i-Hazrat-i-Kaiser-i-Hind, Chief of Faridkot". With such grand titles it was only natural that these Rajas turned to England, France and Italy for getting their portraits done in oil by famous European painters, or get photographed by Samuel Bourne. The days of the local court painter were clearly numbered, and the Sikh school of painting gradually disappeared, merging towards its end into what later came to be known as the Company style of painting. In fact when Baden Powell did a survey on the indigenous crafts and industry of Punjab in 1872 he could not find a single good painter in Amritsar. The next step was also obvious and the British proceeded to establish their own Mayo School of Arts in 1875, at Lahore. Wherever local traditions remained it was more due to ruler specific encouragement, like that of Maharaja Narinder Singh at Patiala, and later Maharaja Bhupinder Singh.

Stimulus for wall painting and frescoes had been provided by religious establishments like Gurudwaras and the various dharamsalas and akharas like those of the Udasi and Vaishnava sects all over Punjab, and the large establishments at Pindori and Damthal. Since Sikhism was a very open religion the Hindu pantheon and legends provided for some images, and common celebrations of Hindu festivals deepened the bond. The themes from Hindu myths and epics included those of the Bhagwat Puran, Ramayana and Mahabharatha. Also painted were incarnations of the various avatars of Vishnu like Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Vamana (fish, tortoise, boar, dwarf), Shiv and Parvati, Lord Ganesh with Riddhi and Siddhi. Popular themes were the churning of the ocean and the lifting of mount Govardhan by Krishna and his *holi lila*, *chira harna* and *daan lila* were vividly painted. Also shown are Dharmaraj and heaven and hell themes. There were *ragini*, *baramasa* and *nayika* themes, as well as the love stories of the Mirza Sahiban, Heer Ranjha, Sohni Mahiwal, Sassi Punnu and Laila Majnu. A favourite subject of the muralists were the *janamsakhi* series of Guru Nanak, or depicting him with the other Sikh Gurus. Guru Gobind Singh, mounted on his horse and with his falcon, was prominently painted. Martyred sons of Guru Gobind Singh and other heroes were also painted. Some of the best murals in

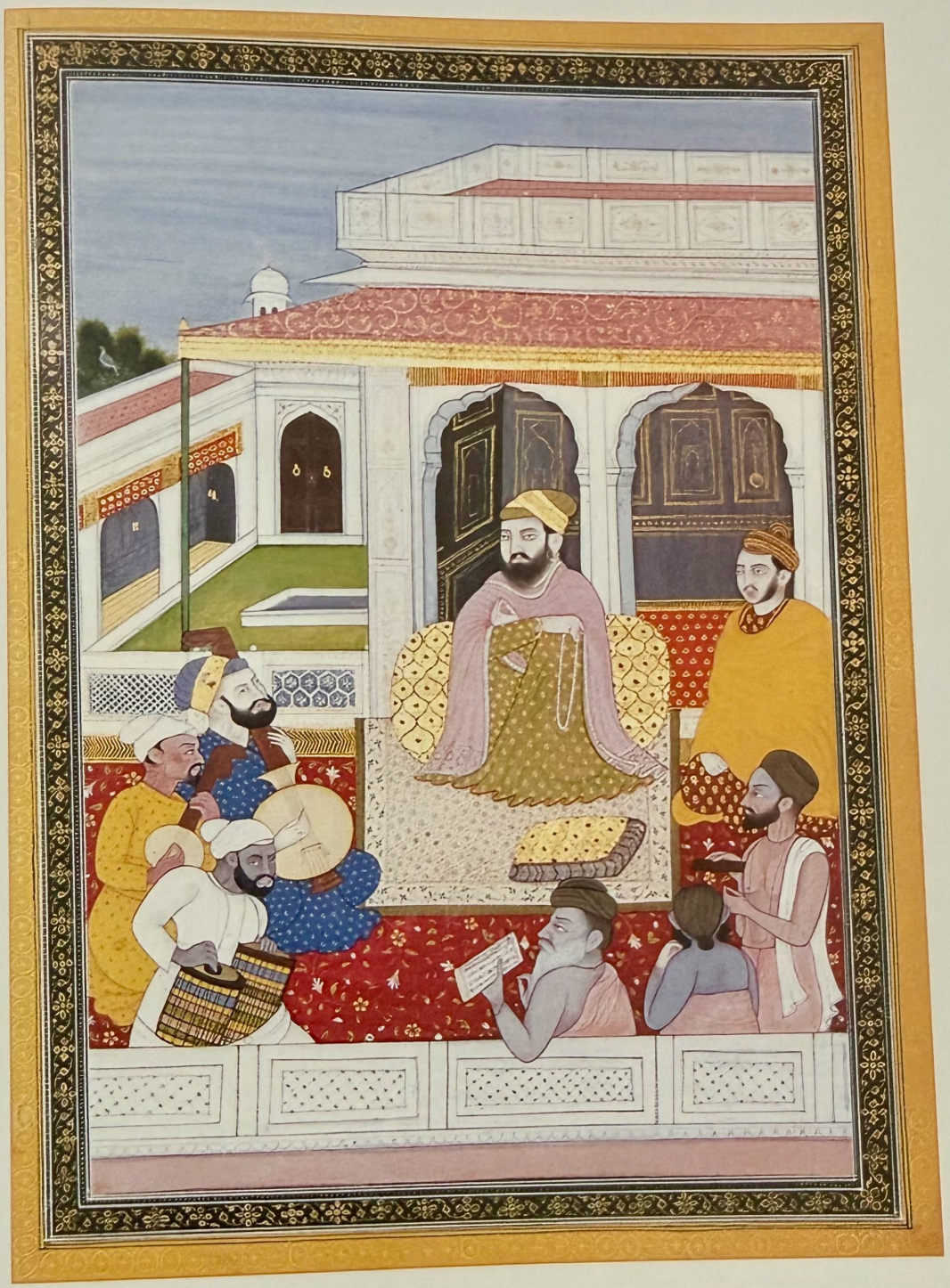
Amritsar are in the *akhara* of Balanand which was founded in 1775 AD. There is also a *janamsakhi* series in the Baba Atal Gurudwara, in the vicinity of the Golden Temple. This Gurudwara was built in honour of Guru Hargobind Singh in the late eighteenth century and the *janamsakhi* paintings appeared to have been done in the late nineteenth century. Apart from the religious themes and images of the Sikh Gurus, portraits of rajas and maharajas, courtiers, nobles, generals, jagirdars, sardars and martyrs were profusely painted. Ranjit Singh and his sons were profusely painted on walls in Lahore and Amritsar, and so were the respective rulers in the other Sikh states. The Nihangs made colorful subjects, including the Akali Phula Singh. According to the accounts of travellers even the European generals in Ranjit Singh's court patronized muralists and had done in their residences murals on a wide range of themes, including those from their home countries. Specific occasions were also painted for posterity, one of the famous ones being the meeting of Raja Ranjit Singh with the Governor General, Lord William Bentinck, at Ropar in October 1831. After the collapse of the Lahore court the Anglo-Sikh wars were often painted by muralists, who were often the masons who built the structures. Many other akharas, temples and samadhis (tombs) also had wall paintings, all over Punjab, but are now in disrepair, some having been pulled down already.

When the first wave of European artists left Punjab in the middle of the nineteenth century, they were soon replaced by a new group of artists, all over India, working in the new medium of photography. Photographic processes were discovered in Europe in 1839 and it took a decade for them to become commercial. In 1848, this medium came to India and soon commercial photographers were established in Bombay and Calcutta, though they were not many. The first Indian photographic society was founded in Bombay on October 3, 1854, followed by those in Bengal and Madras the next year. Competing with professional establishments for attention were amateur photographers, who were often employees with the East India Company and army officers. The various census reports were soon embellished with the portraits of 'natives'. Lord Canning, the Viceroy at that time, and Lady Canning were great patrons of photography and encouraged civilian officers to photograph native lifestyles and submit them. Before long, by 1865, the India Office in London was deluged with over 100,000 photographs of Indian subjects. Between 1868 and 1875 the treatise 'The People of India' was published in London, in eight volumes. Anthropologists delighted themselves with this new medium to illustrate visual proofs of their research and theories, like Risley's famous conclusion that, "In India the status of a man is indirectly proportional to the width of his nose", since proto-australoid tribals had short and flat noses! The folks back home got to see the 'tough' lives of their compatriots in the colonies, with the incredible mix of tribes and castes, trying to improve their lot. The Mutiny also gave rise to the spirit of photo-journalism in the photographers. Samuel Bourne was amongst the leading British photographers, and, like many artists, had switched over from painting to photography, and continued to indulge in both. He came to India in 1862 and became associated with the firm of Bourne and Shepherd, and photographed people, princes and places. Bourne and Shepherd also brought out a book in 1874 titled the 'Photographs of Architecture and Scenery in Gujarat and Rajputana'. Others like Maurice Portman reached out to the Andaman islands. The Archeological Survey of India was established in 1870 and the British took great pleasure in documenting photographically the immovable assets of the Raj. Amongst the leading Indian photographers was the great Lala Din Dayal, who established shop around 1862 and was the official photographer of the Nizam of Hyderabad. The maharajas continued to be the greatest patrons of this new art and some, like the Maharaja of Benaras, employed permanent court photographers. All of a sudden the art of portraiture had been liberated from the confines of royal courts and made accessible to any one who was interested, could understand the new processes and afford to set them up. For the benefit of women in *purdah* there were even *zenana* studios. Punjab and the Sikhs too had their share of photographic documentation. Perhaps the first British phototgrapher to leave photographic impressions of Punjab was John McCosh in 1848. The other photographic firms operating in Punjab, besides Bourne and Shepherd, were Sachs and W. Baker, founded in 1862. Some great photographs of Punjab were taken by Felice Beato in 1857-58, on his going there in search of post-Mutiny images. The convenient realism of the photographic print, which could also be tinted, was the final blow to the art of traditional miniature painting.



Guru Nanak.

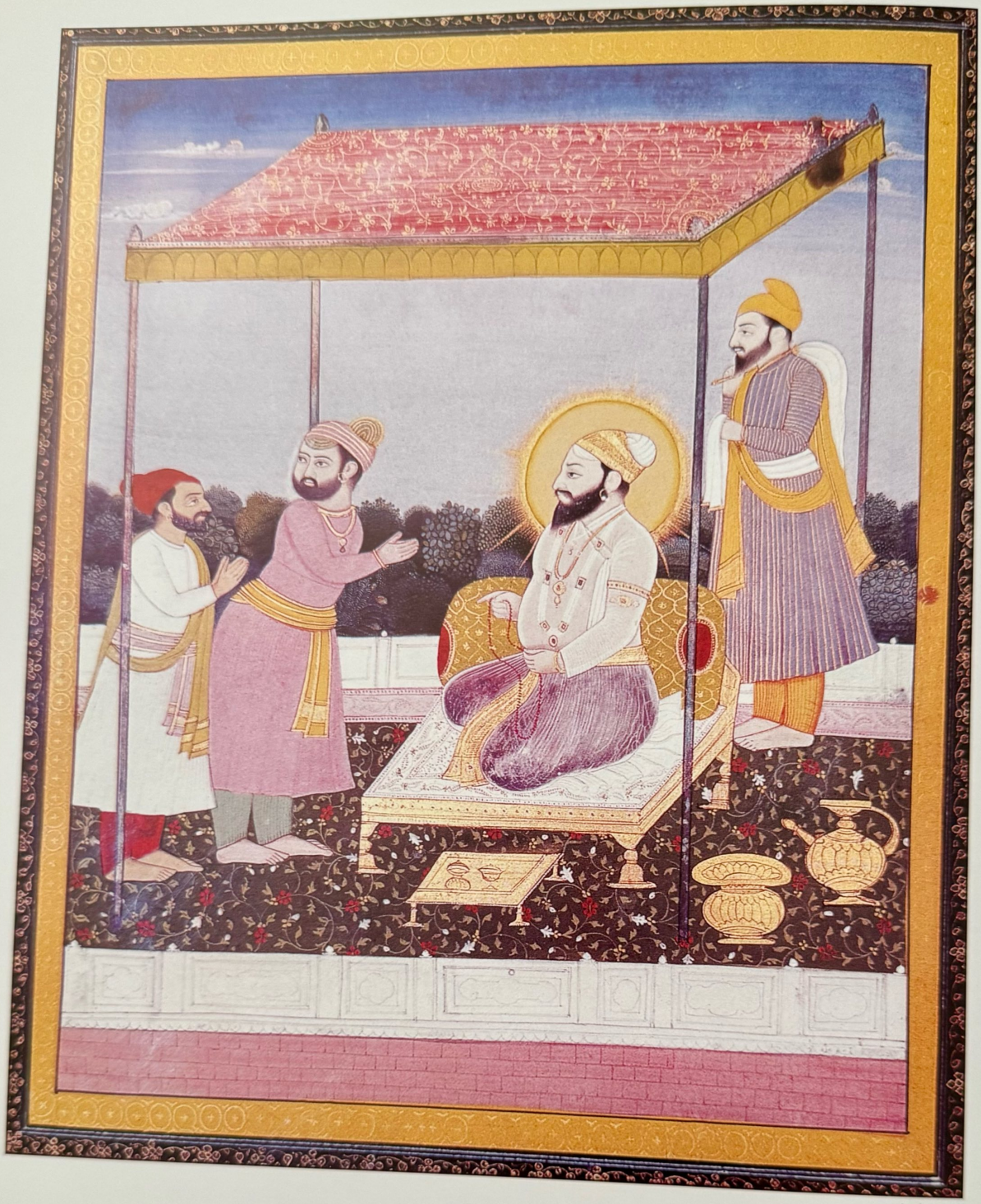
Guru Amar Das.



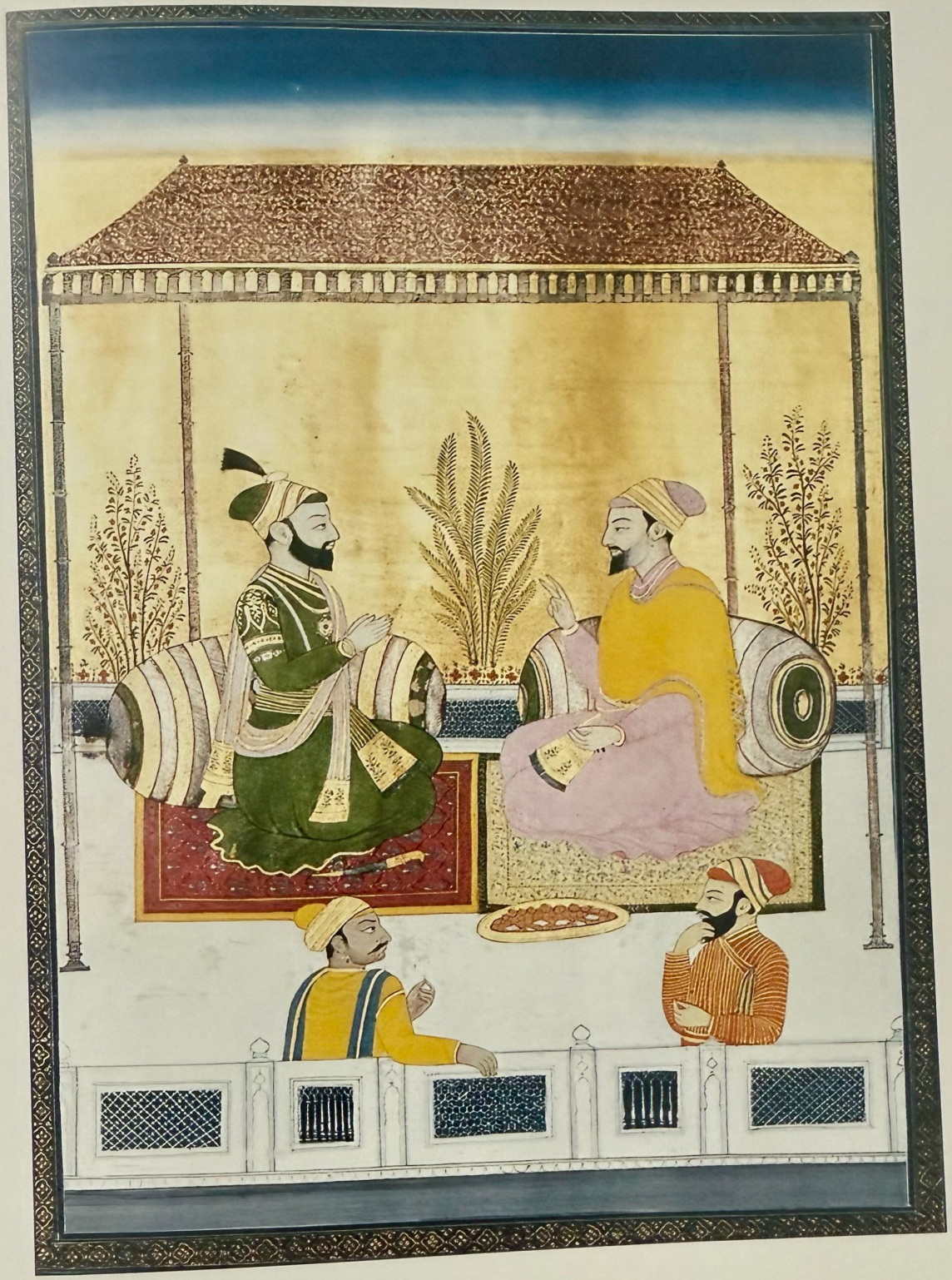
Guru Ram Das.

Guru Arjan Dev.

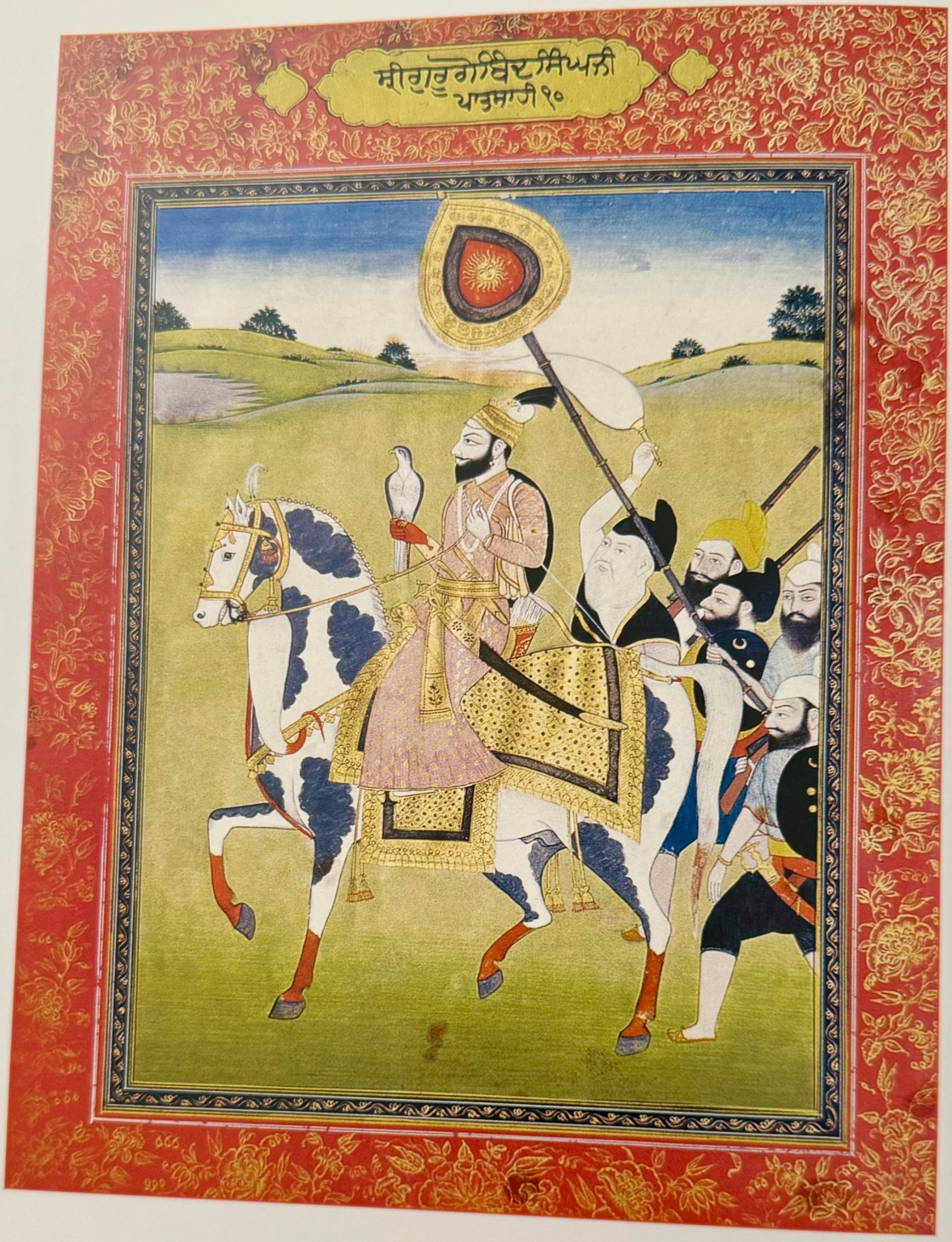
Guru Har Gobind.



Guru Har Rai.

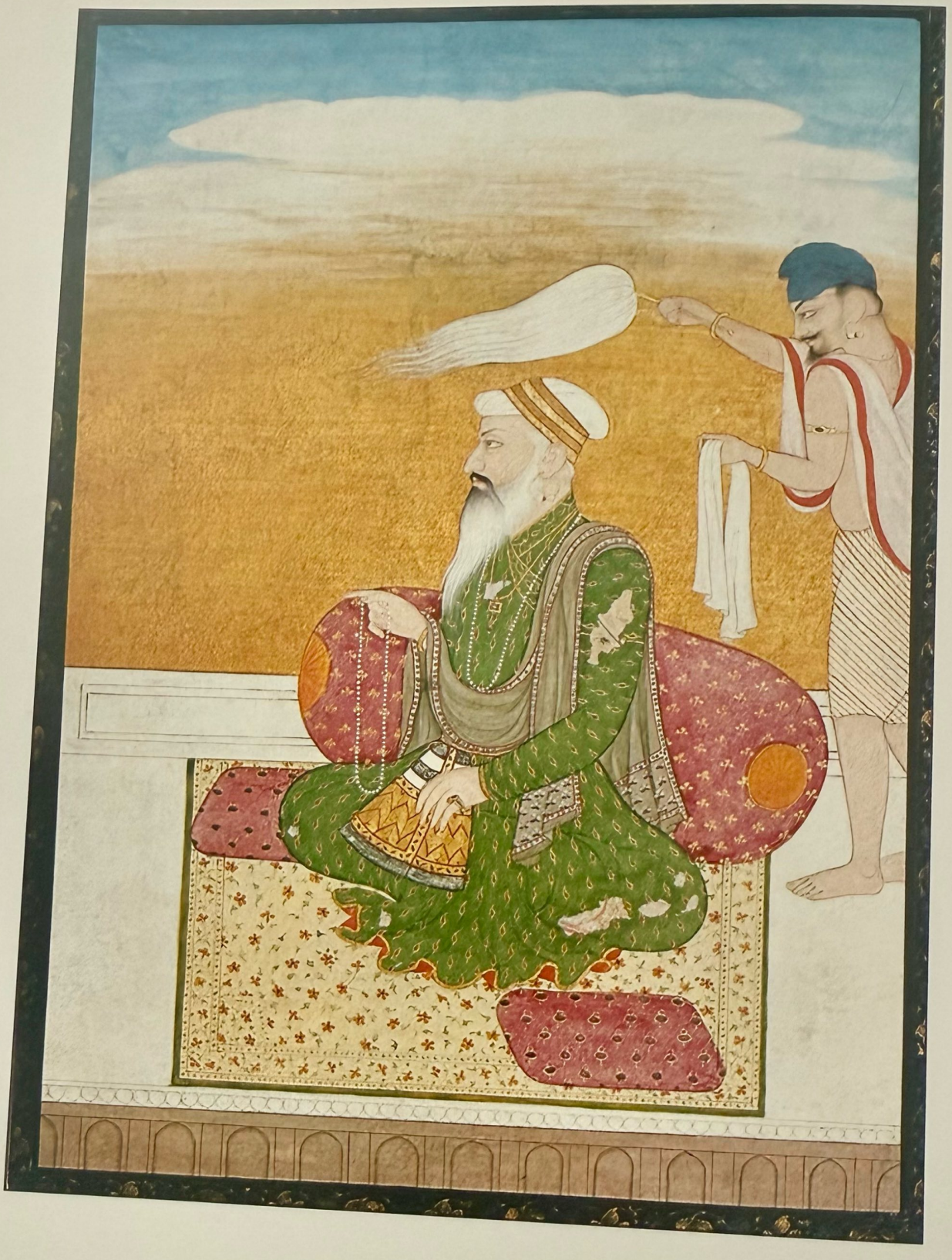


Guru Teg Bahadur.



Guru Gobind Singh.

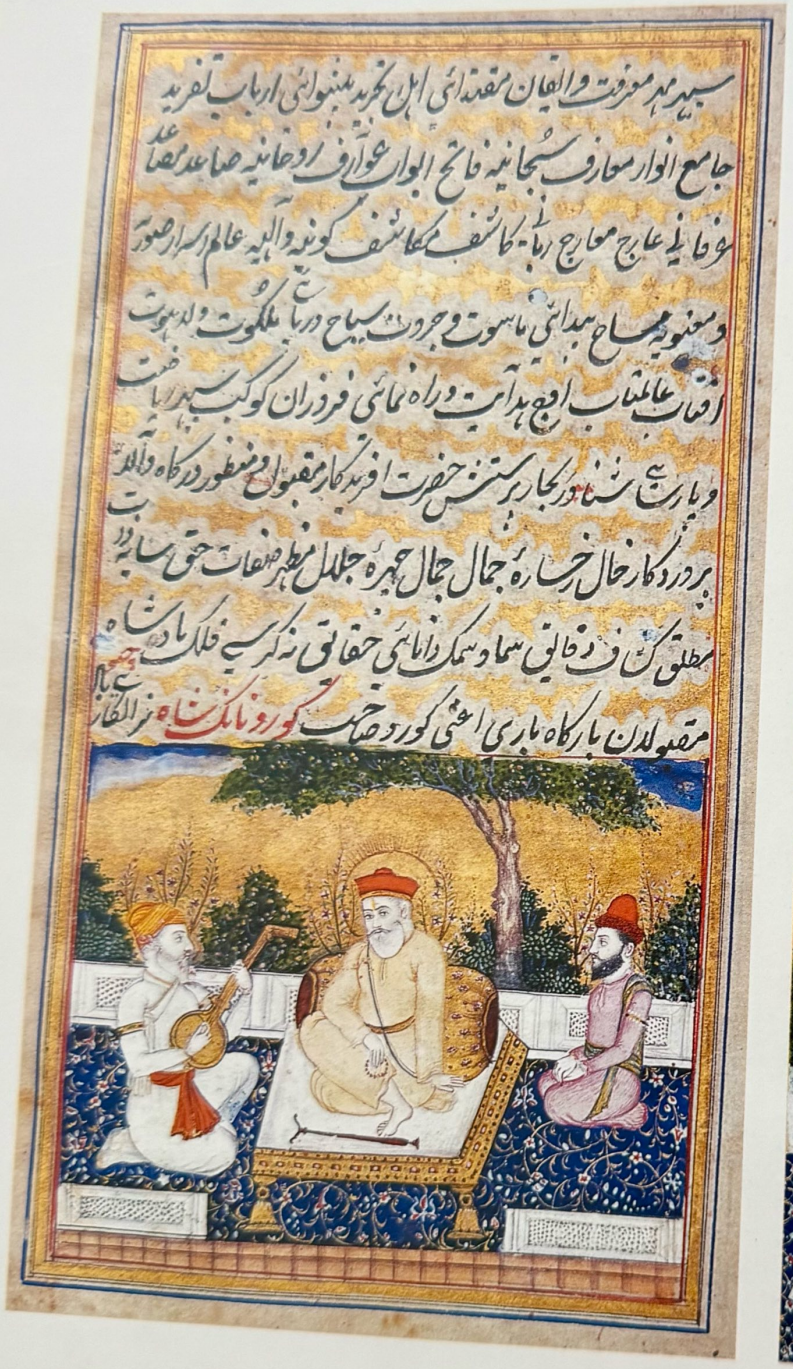
Guru Har Krishan.

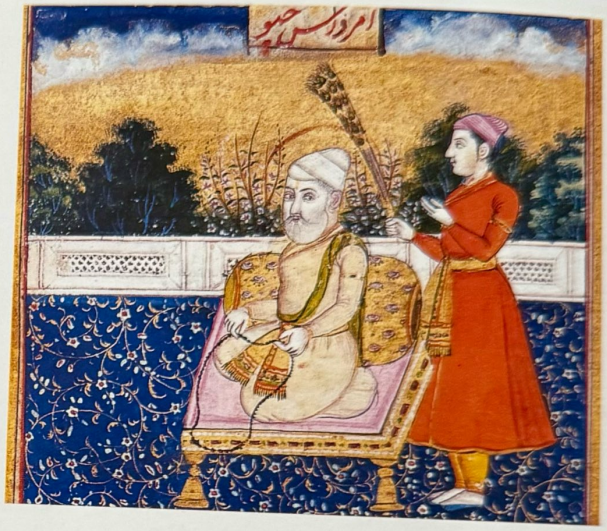


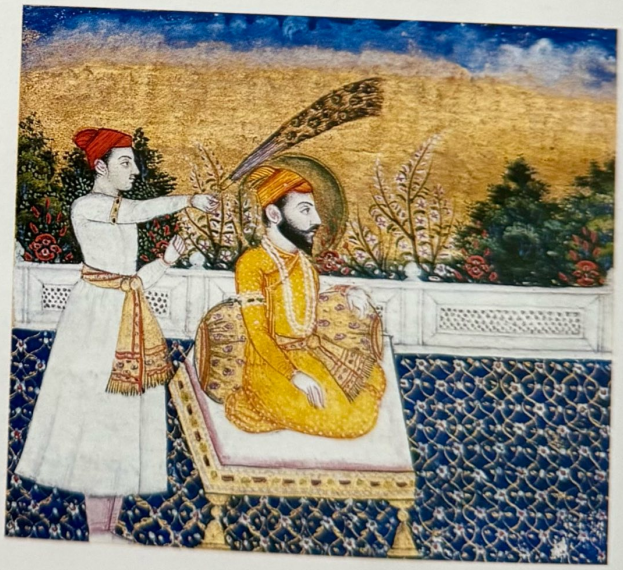
Guru Ram Das.

Guru Har Rai.

Translation of the text from Persian: "O firmament of love, of knowledge, the guide of ascetics, the manifestation of divine light, the opener of the gates of knowledge, one who has climbed the stages of gnosis, the ascender of the heavenly heights, the revealer of the subtle secrets of the Being, the knower of the mysteries of the visible and invisible worlds, the pilgrim of the world of angels and spirits, the summit of guidance, the luminous guide of the stars in the sky, one who has crossed the oceans of devotion, the faithful elect of the heavenly Court, the beauty spot on the face of the loved one, O epiphany of the divine attributes, shadow of the absolute essence, connoisseur of the realities of the nine celestial thrones, king of the chosen — these are the attributes of the Guru Sahib, Guru Nanak."

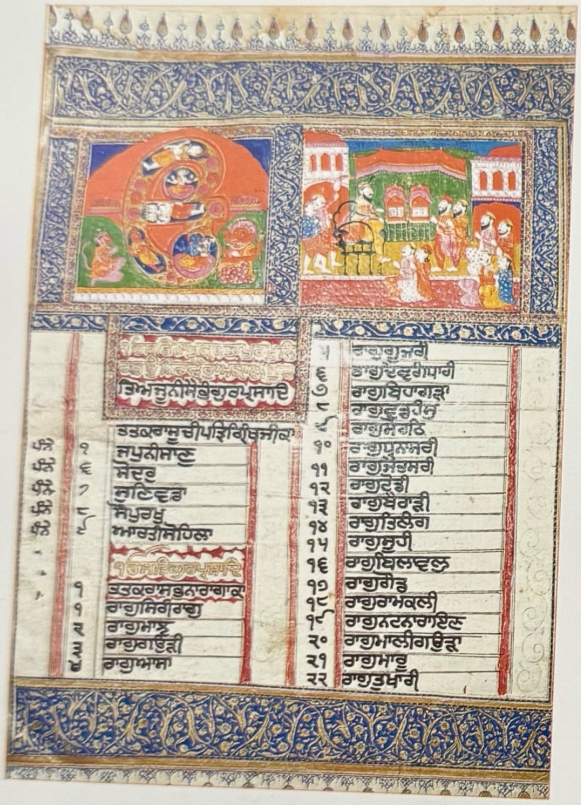






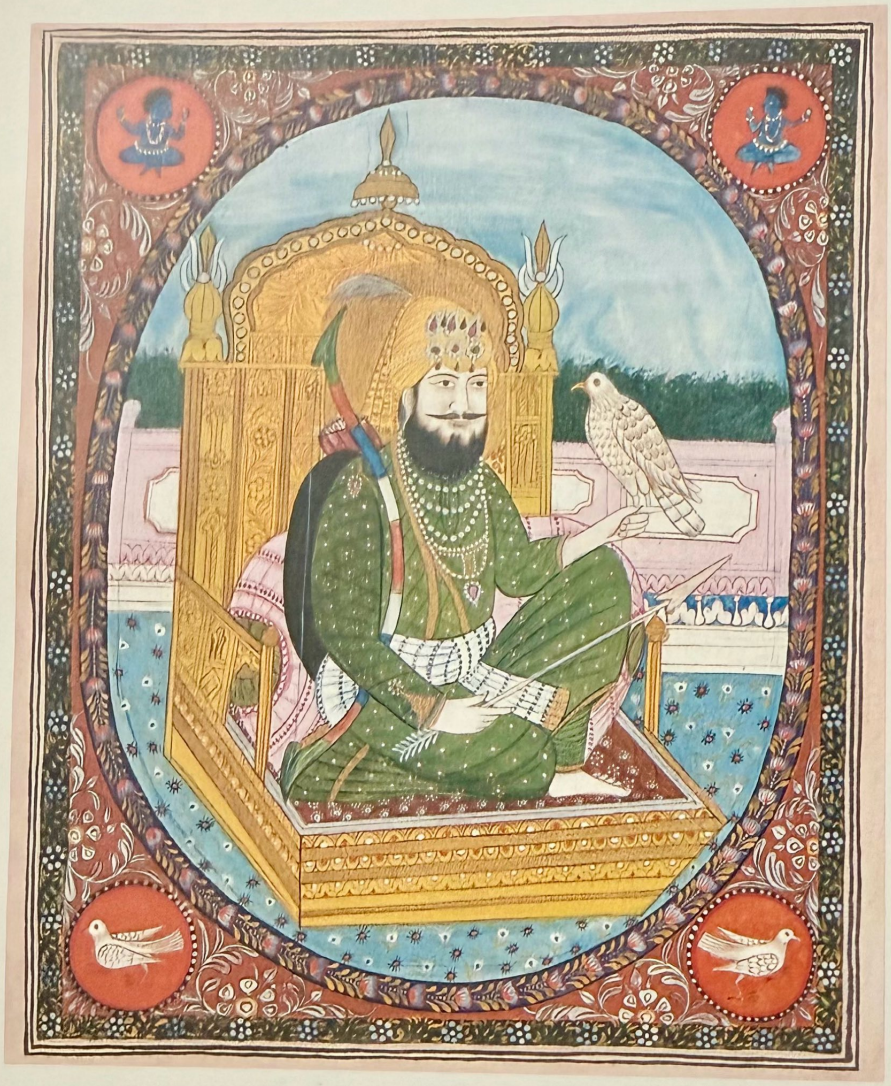
Illustrations in the Persian manuscript Gulgashat-i-Punjab.
Clockwise from left: Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das.

Clockwise from top left: Guru Arjan, Guru Har Gobind, Guru Har Rai, Guru Har Krishan, Guru Teg Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh.

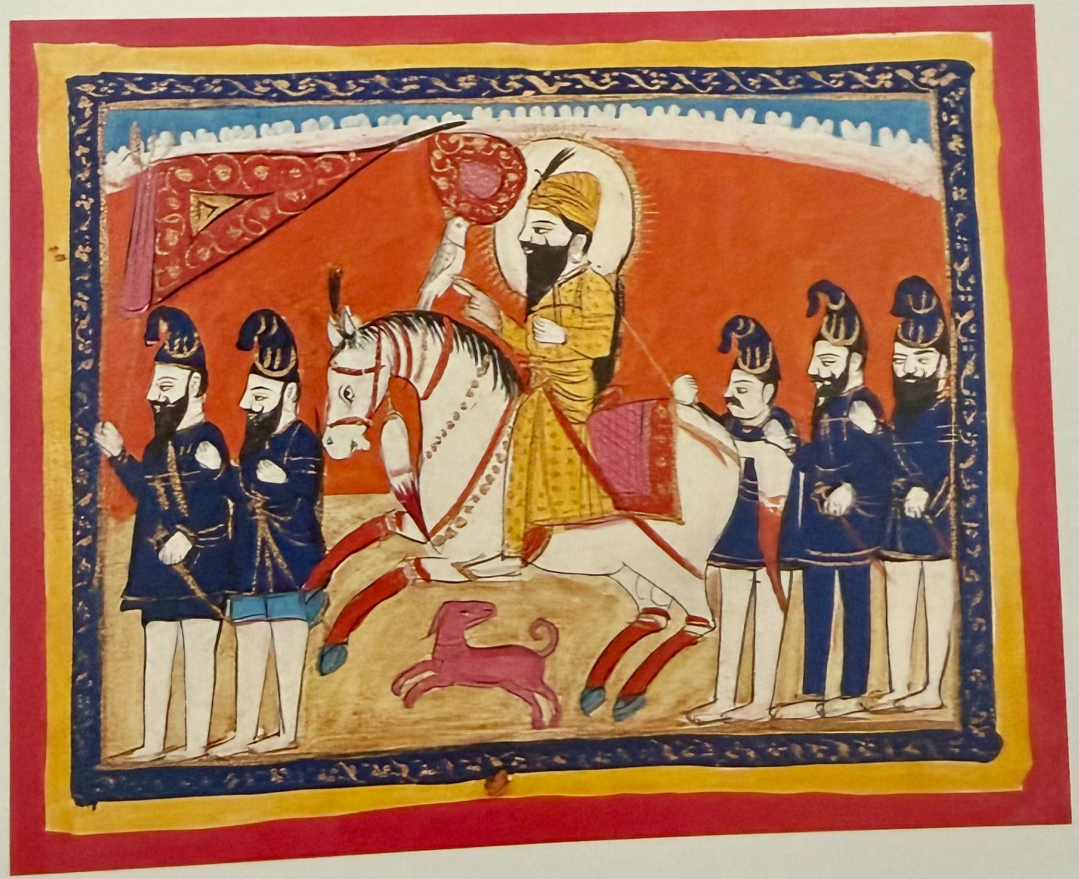


The opening page of a Guru Granth saheb, the *moolmantra*, and details of the illustrations.

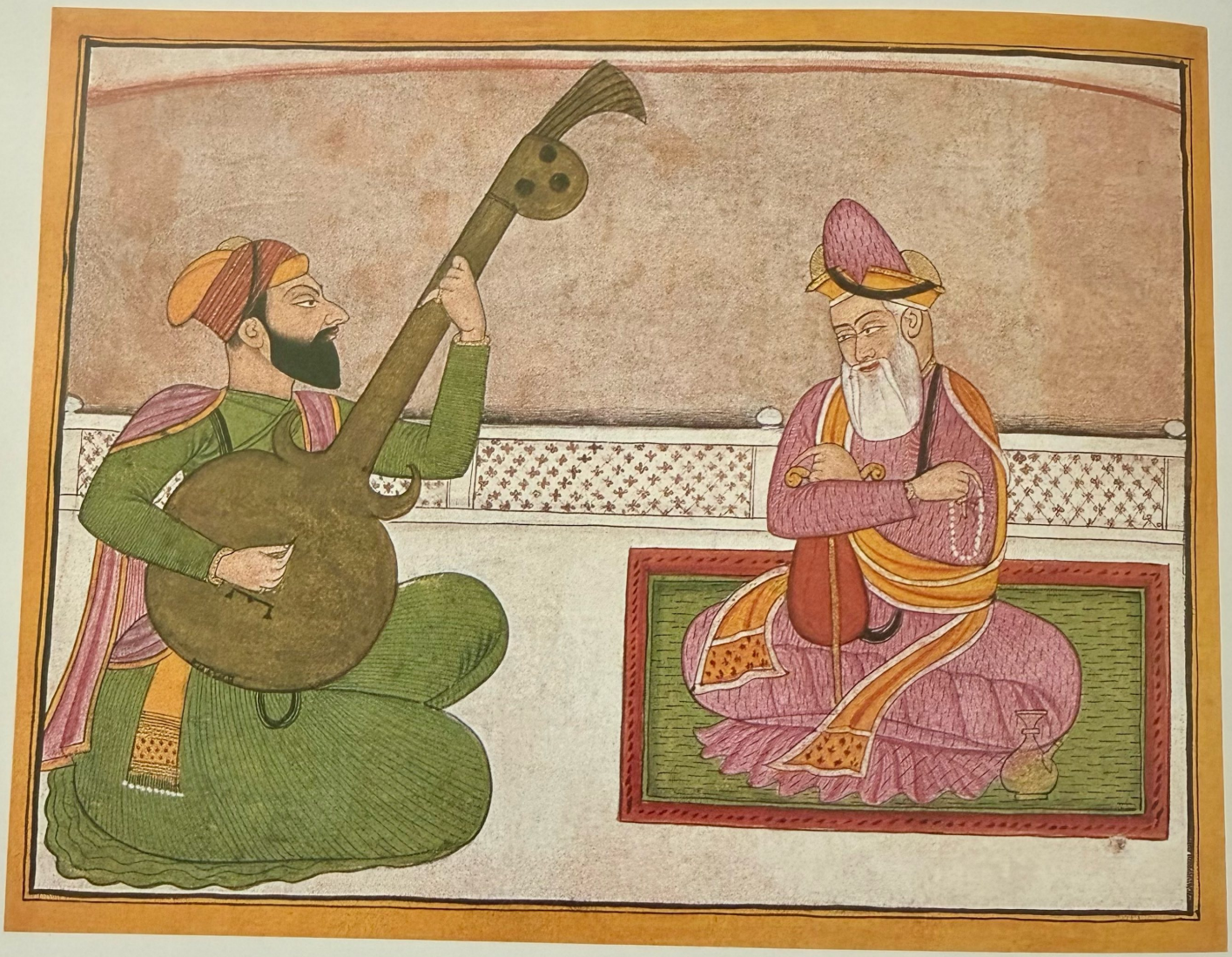
Guru Gobind Singh with his four sons and (above) self cremation at Nander.



Guru Gobind Singh. Miniature painting (left) and a German chromo-lithograph (right) with *zari* outlining.



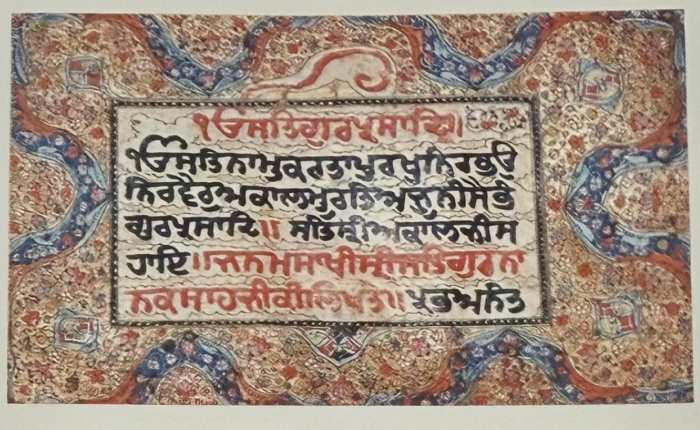
Guru Gobind Singh with the *panj piara*, and initiating sikhs into the *khalsa panth* with *parshad*.



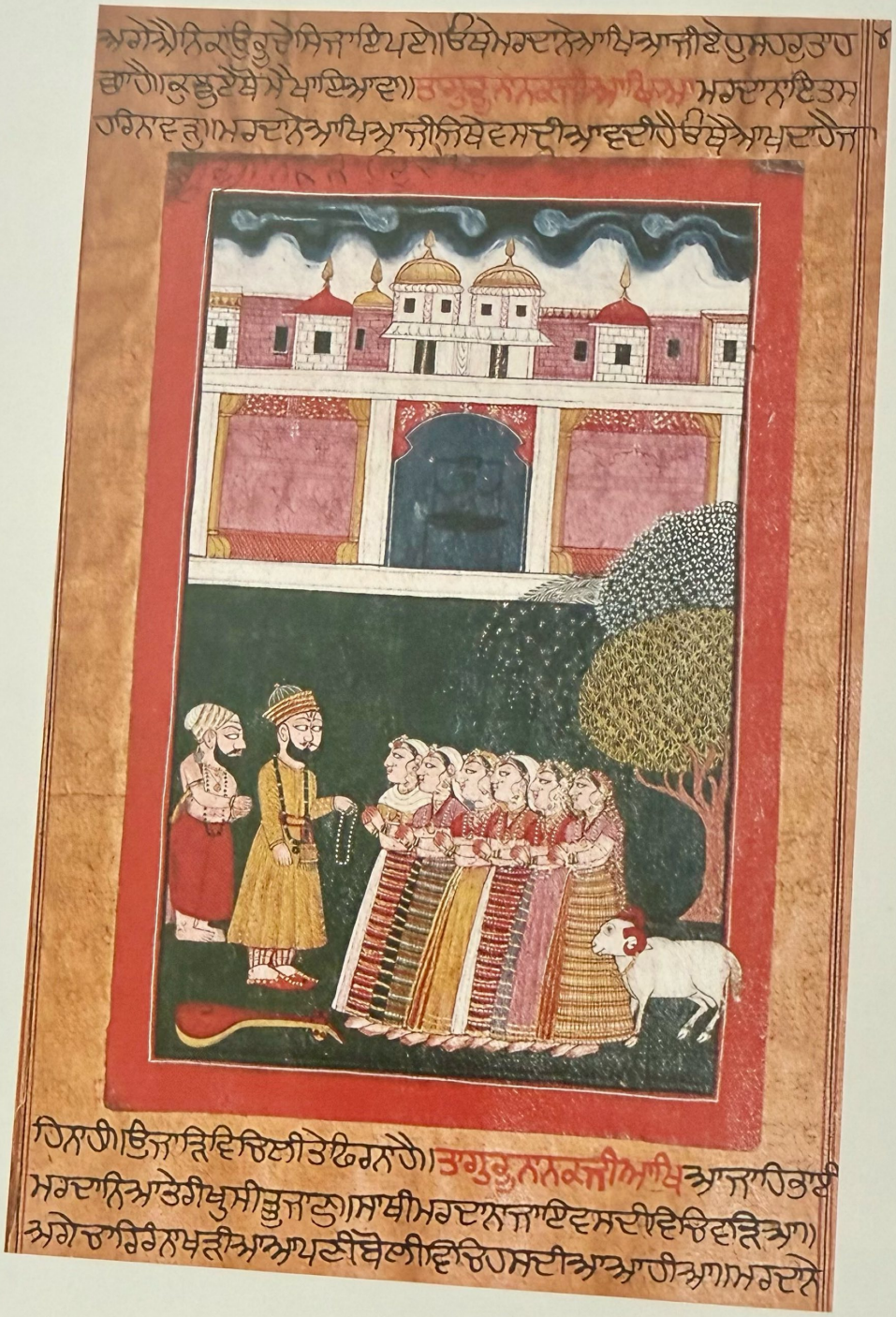
Guru Nanak with Mardana.

The ten Sikh Gurus.

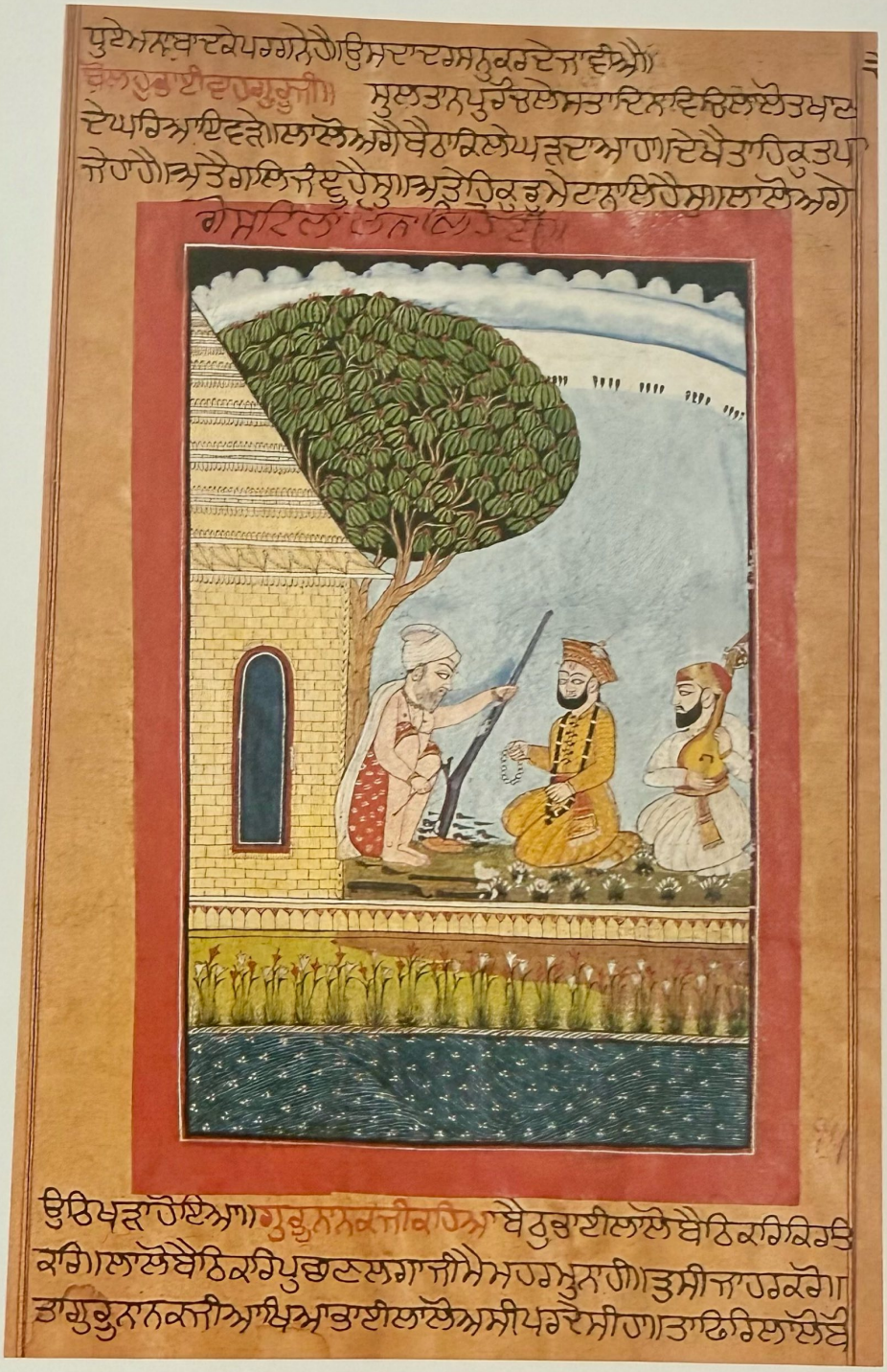
Guru Nanak with Hindu deities.



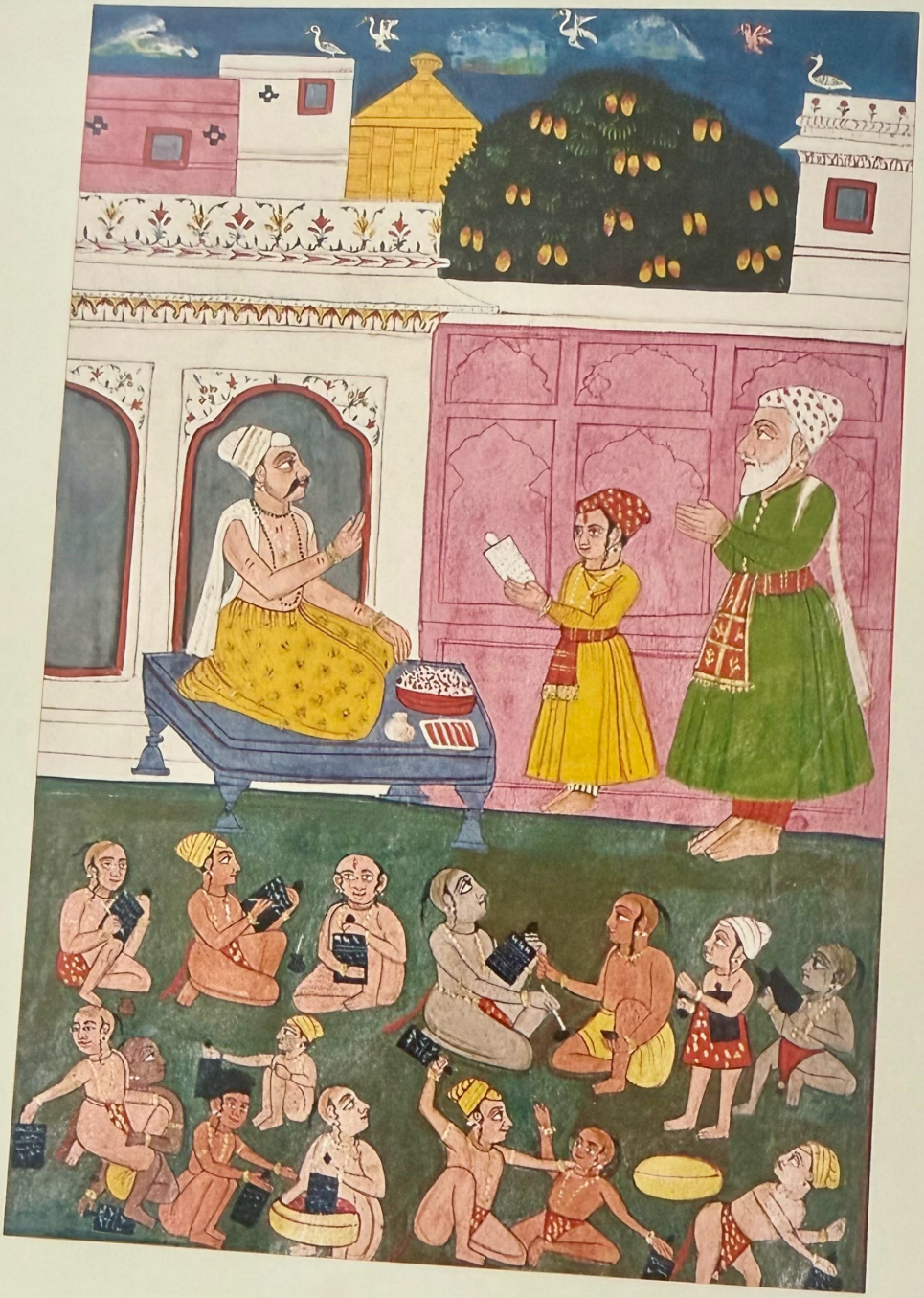
The opening stanza, *moolmantra*, in a Janamsakhi series and a folio illustrating Guru Nanak's marriage preparations.



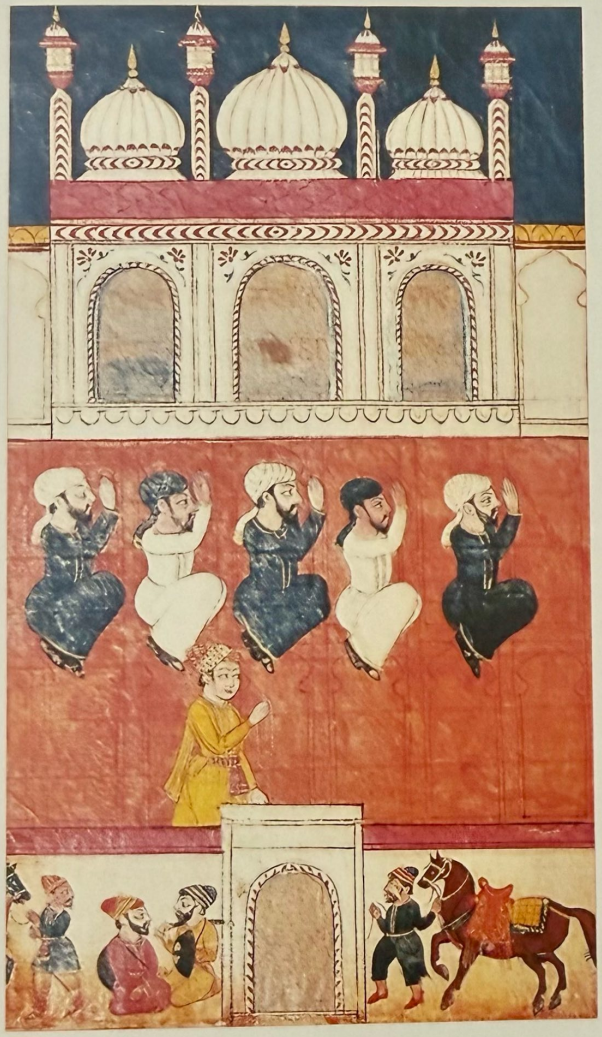
Janamsakhi: Guru Nanak in a region ruled by women, with Mardana transformed into a ram.



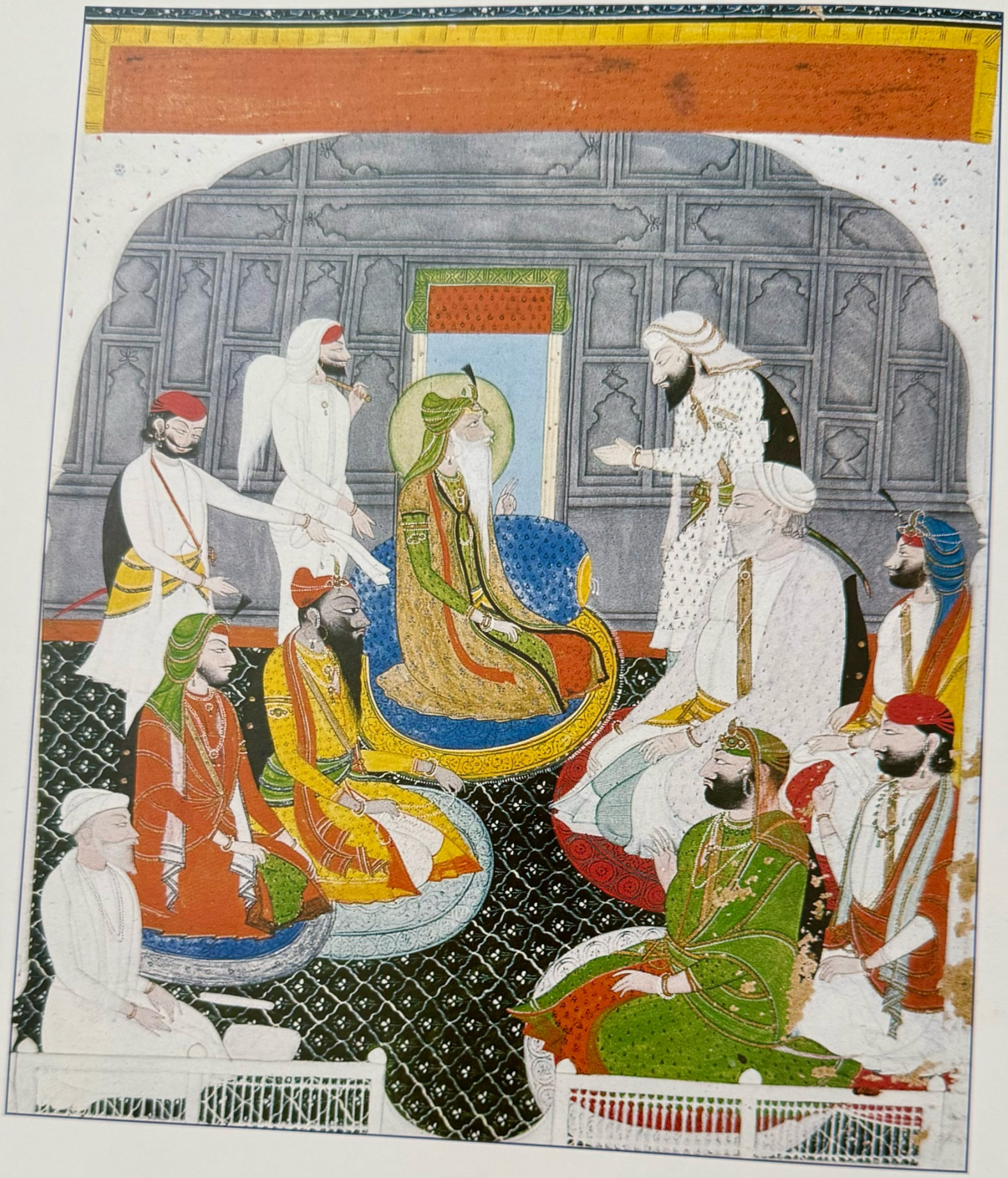
Janamsakhi: *Goshti* with Lalo.



Janamsakhi: Guru Nanak as a child at school.



Janamsakhi: Guru Nanak with Daulat Khan Pathan and (right) with the sidhhas.



Maharaja Ranjit Singh with Kharak Singh and Naunehal Singh.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh with Kharak Singh, Sher Singh and Dalip Singh.

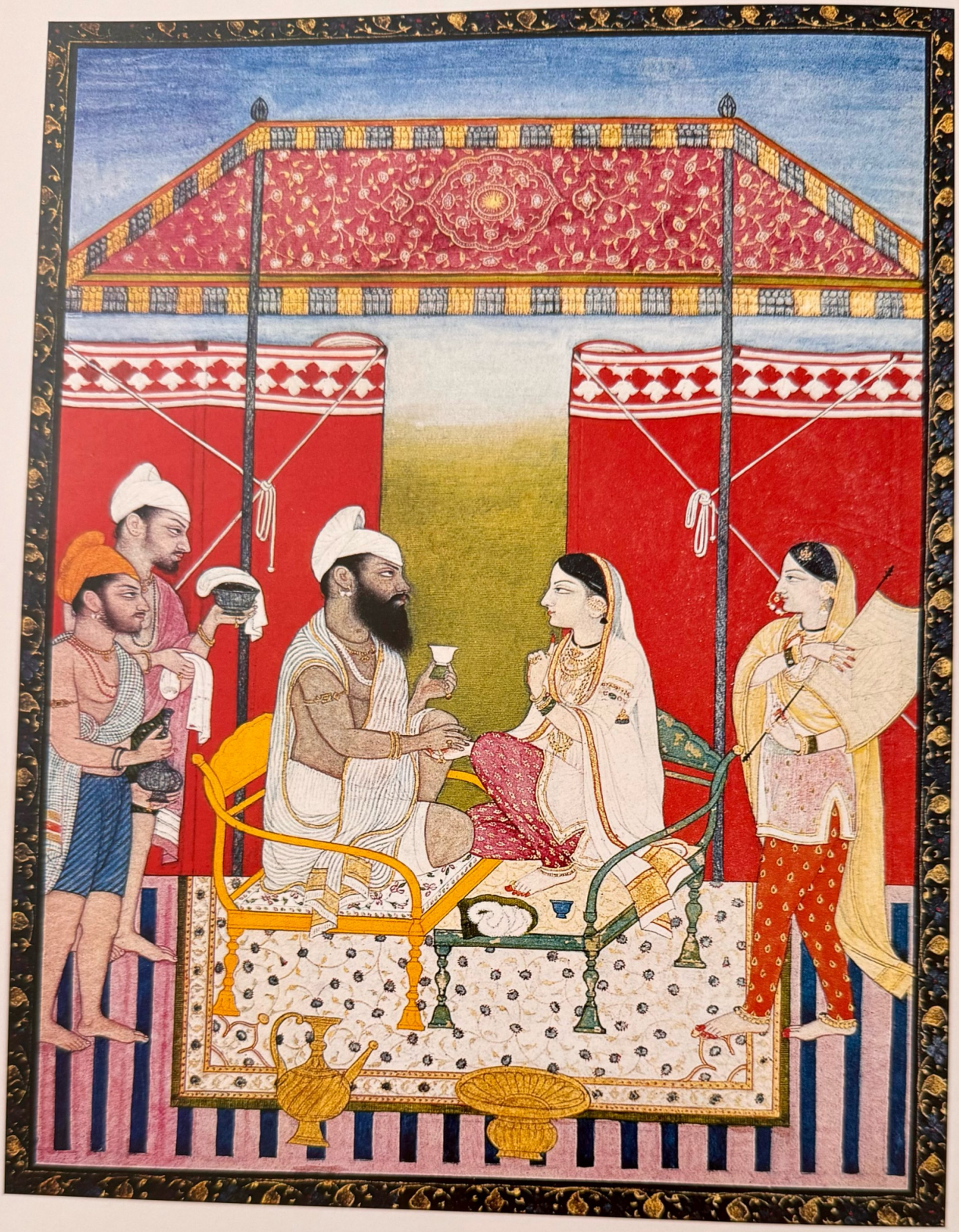
Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Darbar, Lahore.

Left side:
First row (right to left):
Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Kharak Singh, Sher Singh, Hira Singh,
Naunehal Singh, Kashmera Singh, Peshaura Singh.
Second row:
Diwan Dina Nath, Bhai Wasti Ram, Bhai Ram Singh, Pt. Madhu Sudan,
Pt. Radha Kishan, Bhai Gobind Ram.

Right side:
First row (left to right):
Dhian Singh, Jamadar Khushal Singh, Gulab Singh, Suchet Singh,
Lehna Singh Sandhanwalia, Mohammad Khan Kabuli, Dhunkal Singh,
Ajit Singh Sandhanwalia, Diwan Ajudhia Parshad, Diwan Kidar Nath,
Nihal Singh Chhachhi, Chatar Singh Attariwala.
Second row:
Faqir Aziz-ud-Din, Hari Singh Nalwa, Sham Singh Attariwala,
General Ventura, Diwan Sawan Mal, Phula Singh Nihang,
Nawab Sarfraz Khan Multani, Teja Singh, Pir Mohammad Khan Kabuli,
Nar Singh Attariwala, Sher Singh Attariwala, Baba Mian Singh Kotliwala.
Third row:
Faqir Nur-ud-Din, Lehna Singh Majithia, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din,
General Allard, Atar Singh Kalianwala, Gurmukh Singh Lamba,
General Illahi Bakhsh, Ishri Singh Sud, Dhana Singh Malwai,
Gulab Singh Pahuwindia, General Avitabile, Misar Megh Raj.

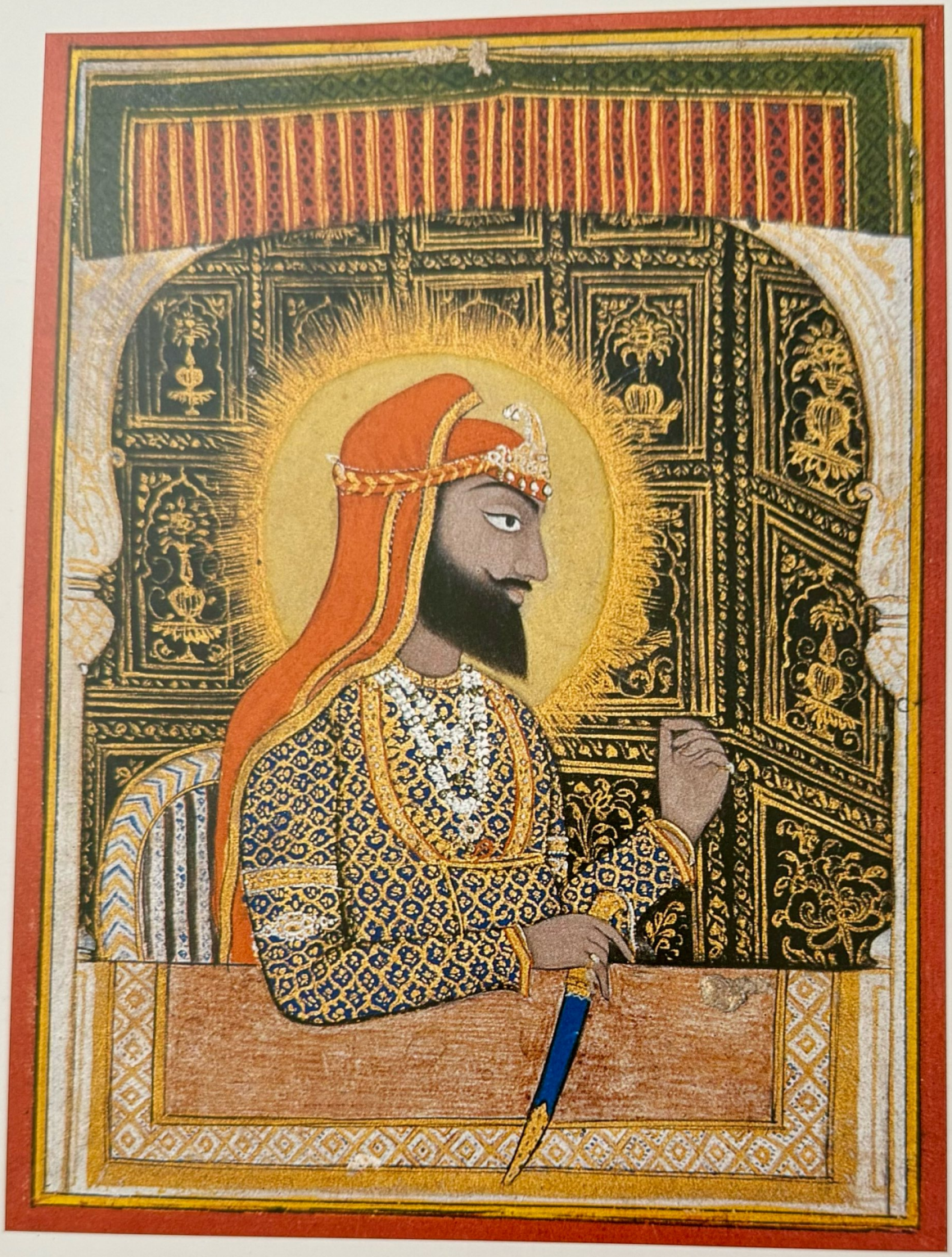
Maharaja Ranjit Singh (painting on top is on glass).

Maharaja Sher Singh after a bath.



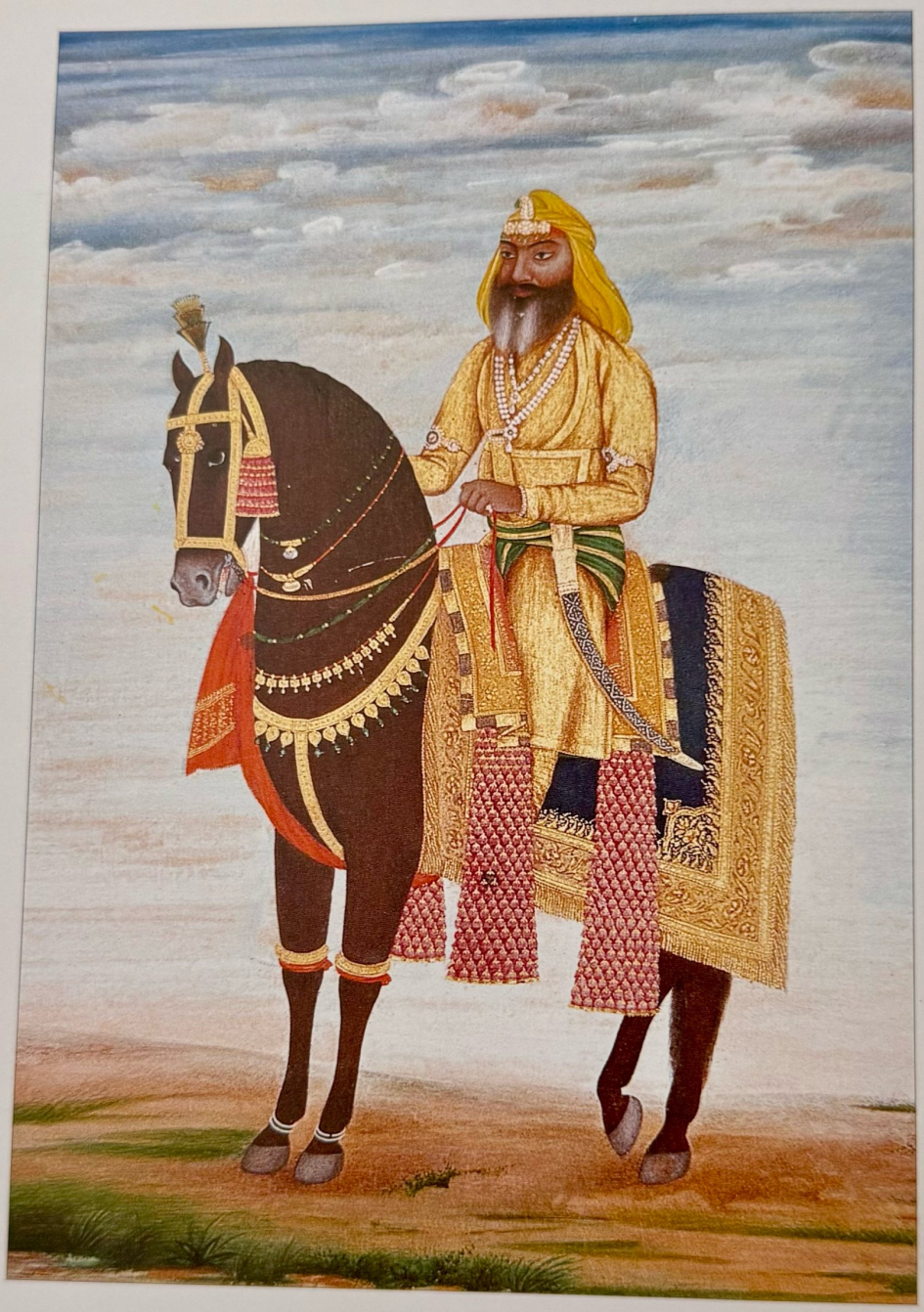
Desa Singh Majithia with a Guler lady.

Top left: Raja Hira Singh. Top right: Sardar Desa Singh Majithia. Above: Raja Dhian Singh.



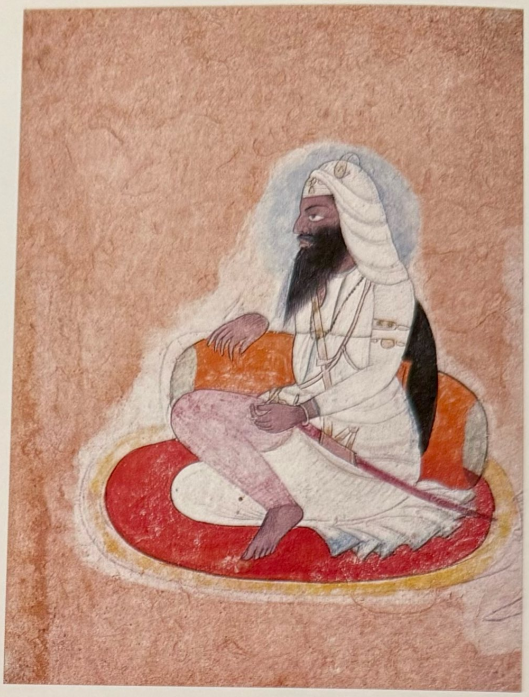
A Patiala ruler.

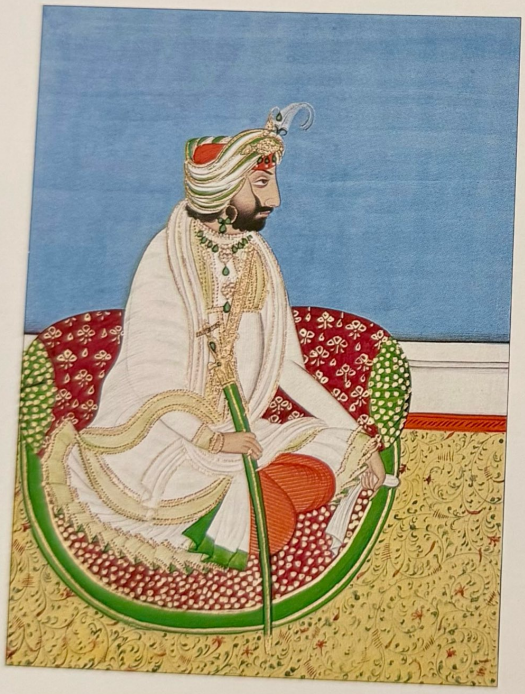
Raja Raghunath Singh with his brother Hardit Singh.



Raja Narinder Singh of Patiala.

Marriage procession of Mian Jai Singh of Guler.

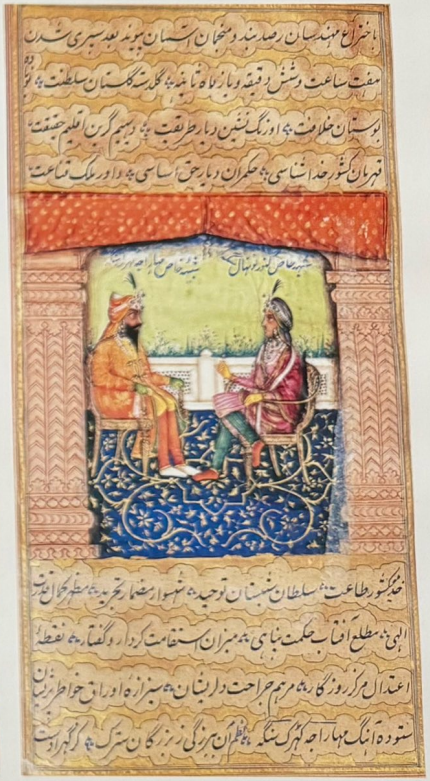




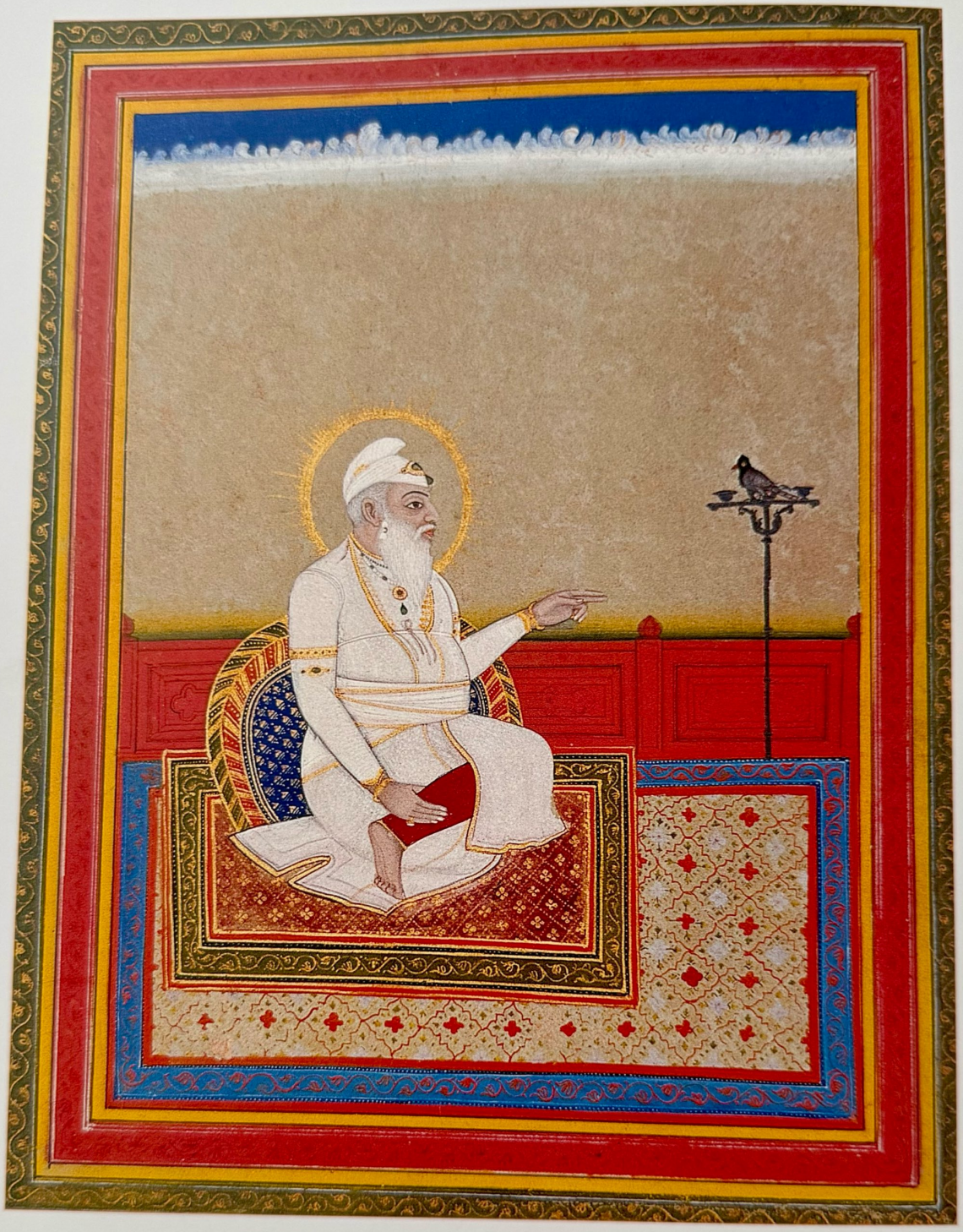
Top: Raja Ranbir Singh and Raja Bikram Singh of Kapurthala.
Above: Raja Gulab Singh and Raja Dhian Singh.

Top: Portraits of a fakir and Sardar Gurbax Singh.
Above: Sardar Singh and Dost Mohammad Khan of Kabul.

Maharaja Narinder Singh of Patiala.



Clockwise from left above: Dalip Singh, Ajit Singh and Lehna Singh Sandhawalia; Pandit Julaha and Hira Singh; Gulab Singh and Jawahar Singh; Naunehal Singh.



Portrait of a Sikh Chief.

Lal Shah Baj.

Lovers on a terrace.

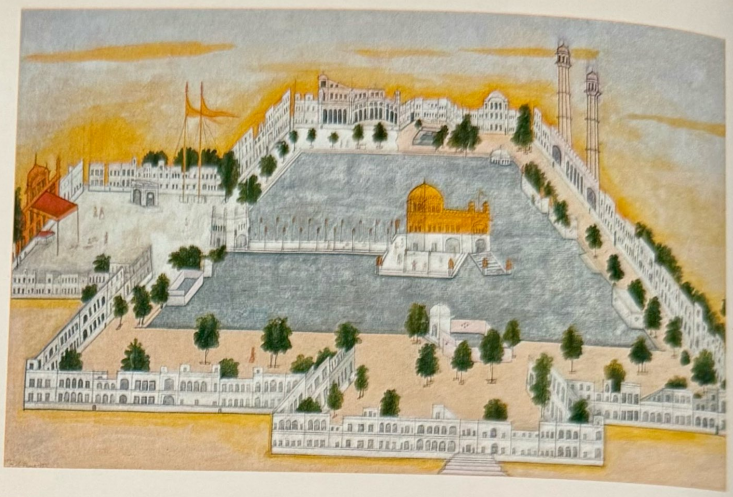
Mian Jai Singh watching a dance performance.

Raja Suchet Singh.

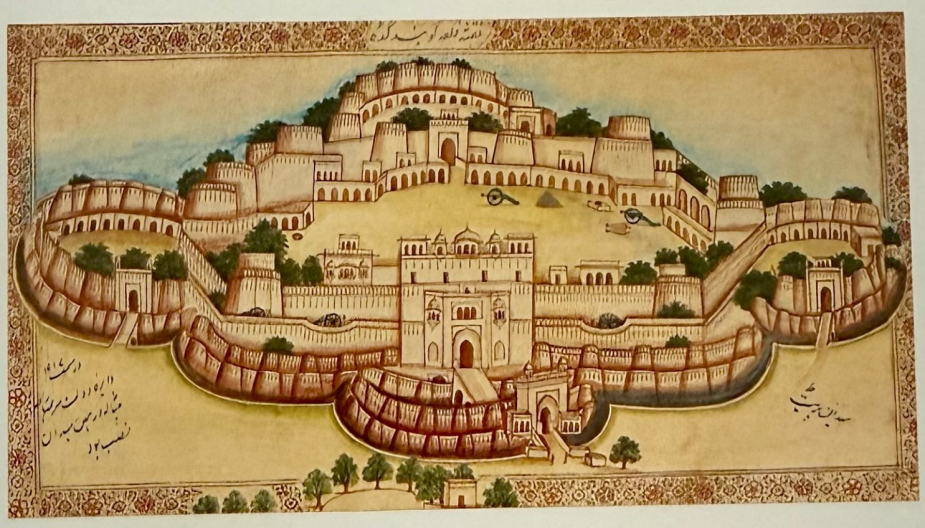
A battle scene.

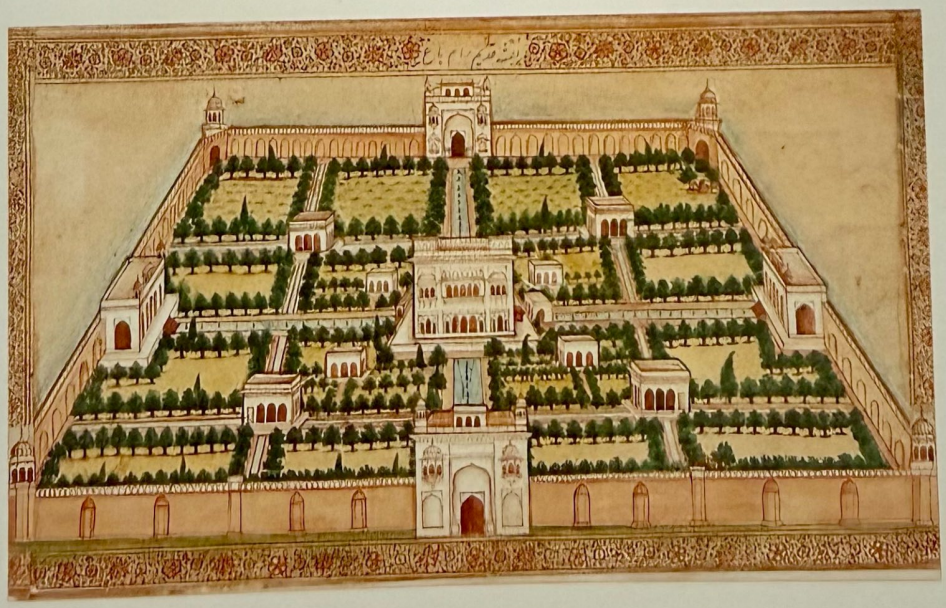
Raja Bhup Singh.

Sardar Singh of Ladwa.



Golden Temple, Amritsar.





From top: Jwalamukhi shrine, Gobindgarh fort and Ranjitbagh at Amritsar.

PICTURE OF THE PROCESSION OF HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA RAGBIRSINGH RAJA-I-RAJGAN OF JEEND ACOMPANING AHULKARSON
ON 8TH APRIL 1878
THE OCCASION OF WARSHIP OF JWALAMUKHI

Raja Jind's visit to Jwalamukhi.

Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind.

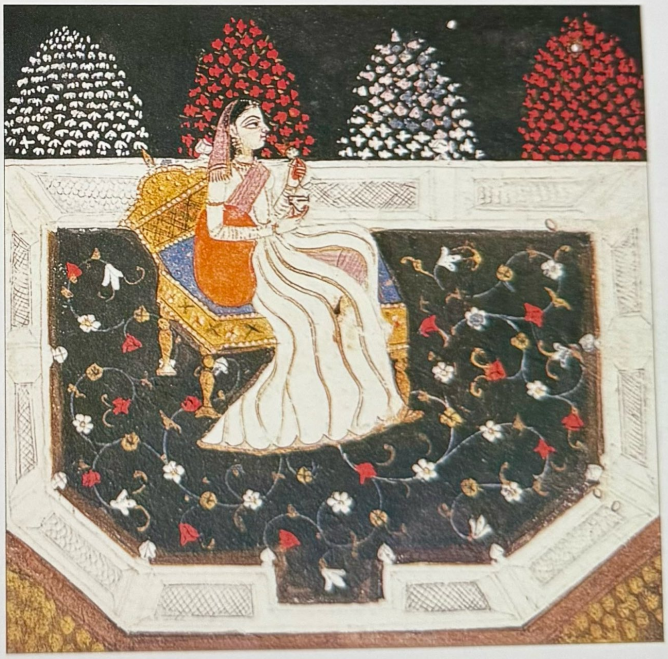
Top: Raja Teja Singh, Raja Rattan Chand, Raja Dina Nath, Sardar Shyam Singh.
Middle: Raja Ranbir Singh, Raja Jawahar Singh, Raja Khushal Singh, Diwan Mulraj.
Above: Sardar Sir Singh, Sardar Hira Singh, Sardar Lehna Singh, Sardar Jawahar Singh.

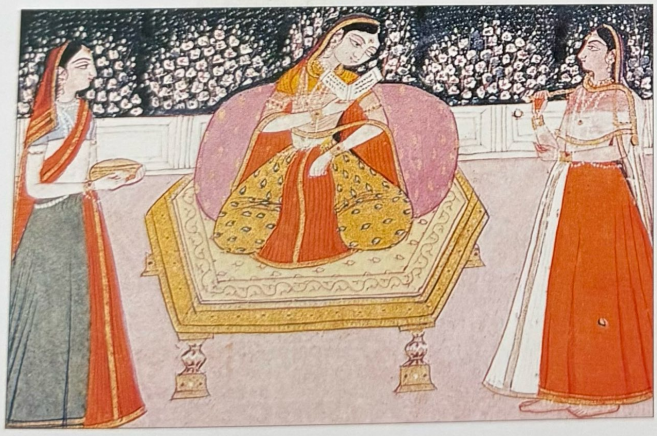
Top: Prince Dalip Singh, Maharani Jindan, Maharaja Sher Singh, Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
Middle: Amir Khush Mohammad Khan, Mir Ali Kabul Wala, Raja Kharak Singh, Raja Naunehal Singh.
Above: Akali Phoola Singh, Nawab Mujaffar Khan, Raja Dhian Singh, Raja Suchet Singh.

Scene at a local fair, with wrestlers in the foreground.

Performing the *bhangra*.

A lady with peacocks on a terrace.



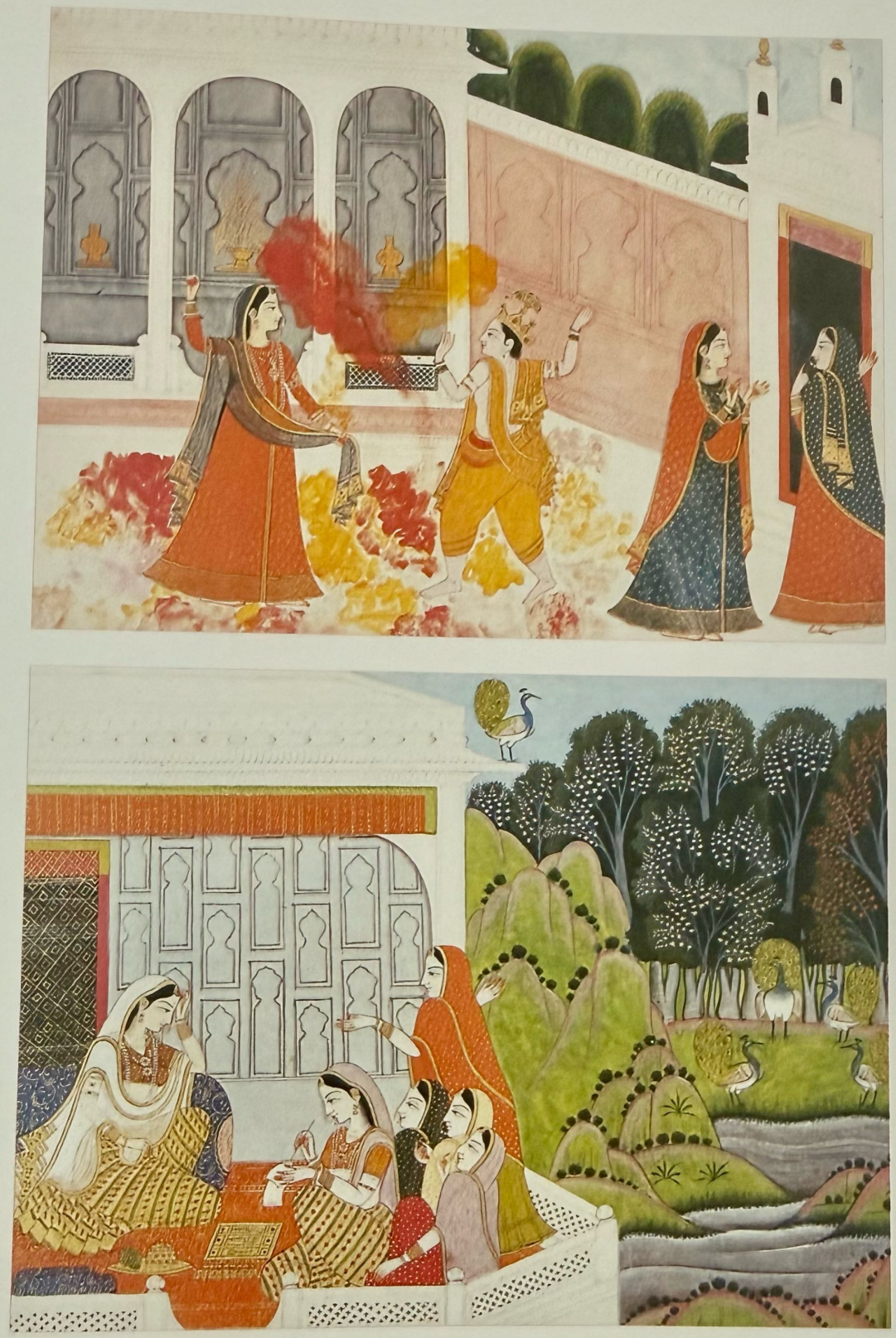


Miniature paintings depicting the ragas (clockwise from top) Dipaki, Asawari, Kedar, Dhanasari, Bhairukhi.

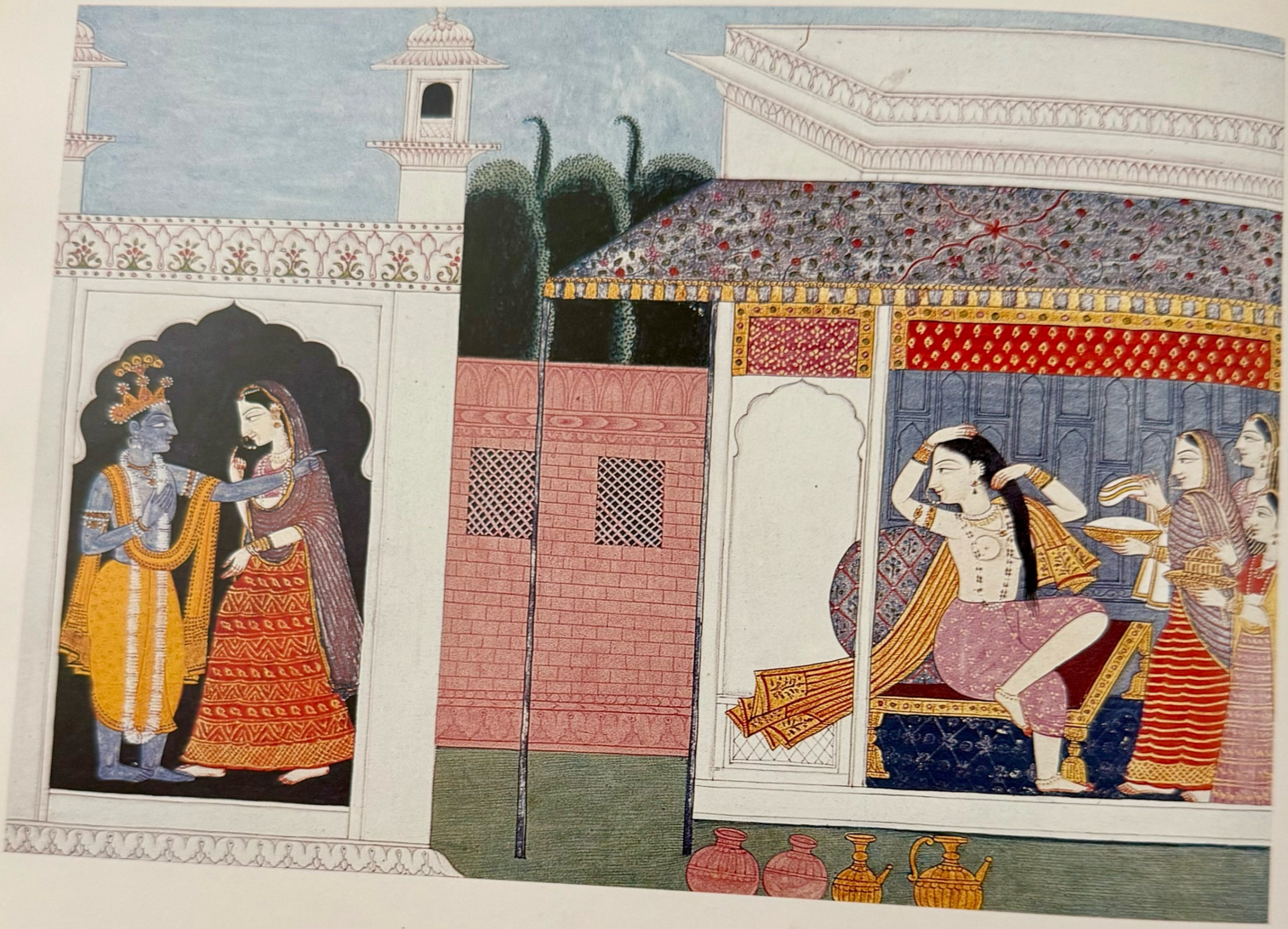
A noble at the Lahore Court.

A composite painting showing Sikh lovers around the legend of Krishna and the milkmaids.

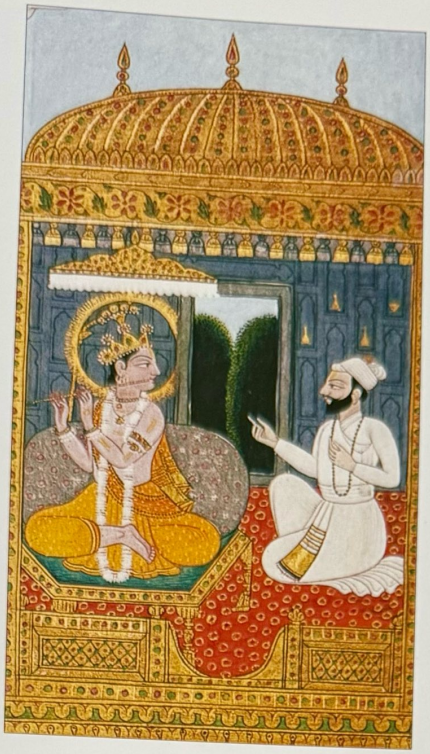
A newly wed bride.

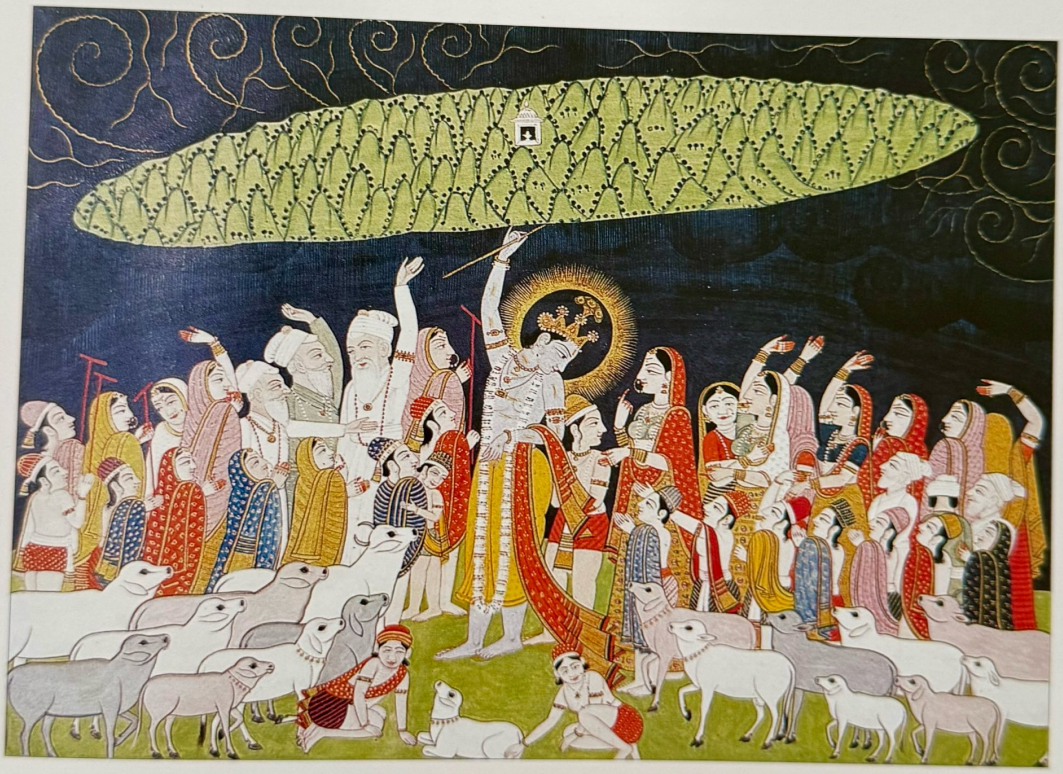


Top: Radha and Krishna playing *holi* and (above) writing a letter to the beloved.



Krishna observing Radha's shringar.

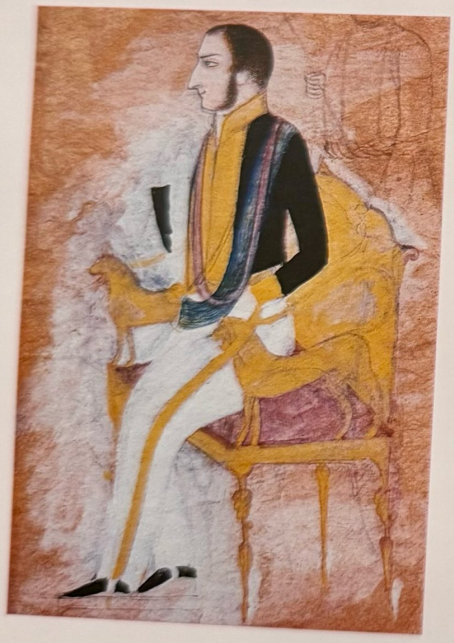




Krishna lifting mount Govardhana.

Miniature paintings on the Radha-Krishna theme, with new accouterments - a chair and sofa!
Left: Krishna braids Radha's hair and (right) Radha in Krishna's garb.

King Edward and the Queen in traditional attire.



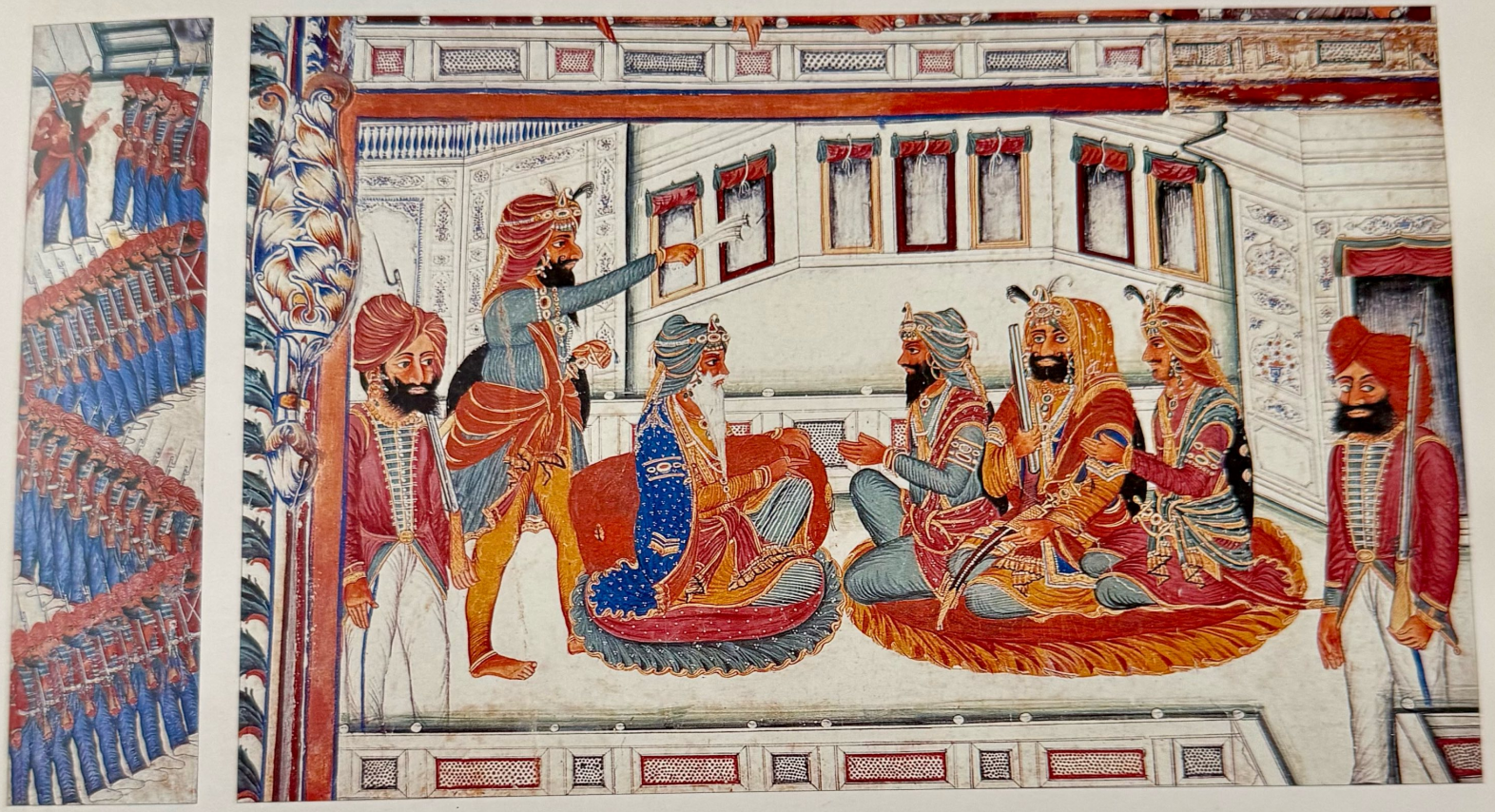
Clockwise from left above: Lord Dalhousie, Lord Auckland and Raja Jai Singh with the Commissioner of Jullunder.

Clockwise from left top: A brahmin, a nihang and nihangini, a qalandar with his animals, potters.

Clockwise from top left: A Gaddi woman and a man, women cooking in a *tandoor* and carpenters.

Craftsmen at work - oil crusher, goldsmith, dyer and turner.

Murals in the *akhara* of Bala Nand, Amritsar.
Top: Guru Nanak painted with the other Sikh Gurus. Above: Guru Nanak with Gorakhnath and other saints.



A general with soldiers and Maharaja Ranjit Singh with Kharak Singh, Sher Singh, Naunehal Singh and (standing behind) Dhian Singh.

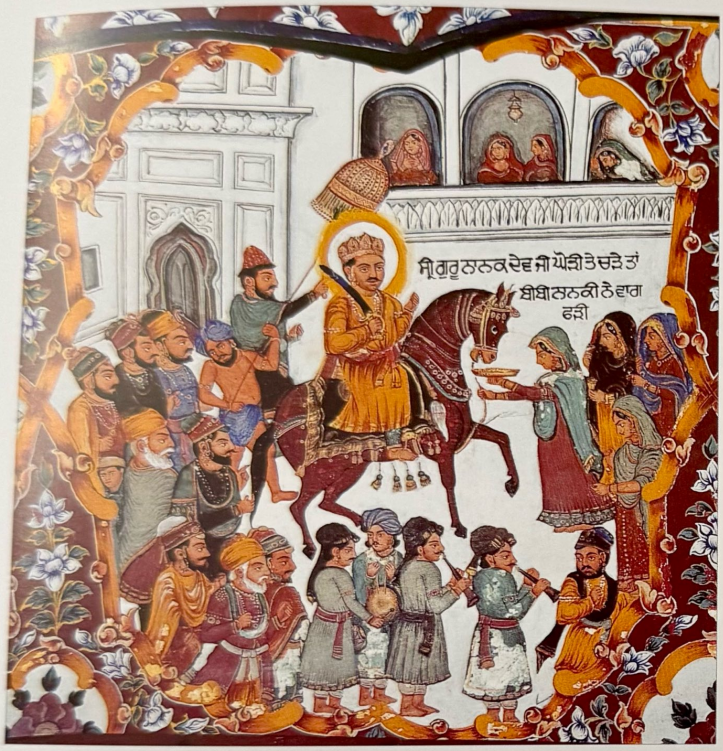
Murals at Baba Atal's Gurudwara, Amritsar.
Guru Nanak with Hindu deities.

Scenes from Janamsakhis of Guru Nanak's life.

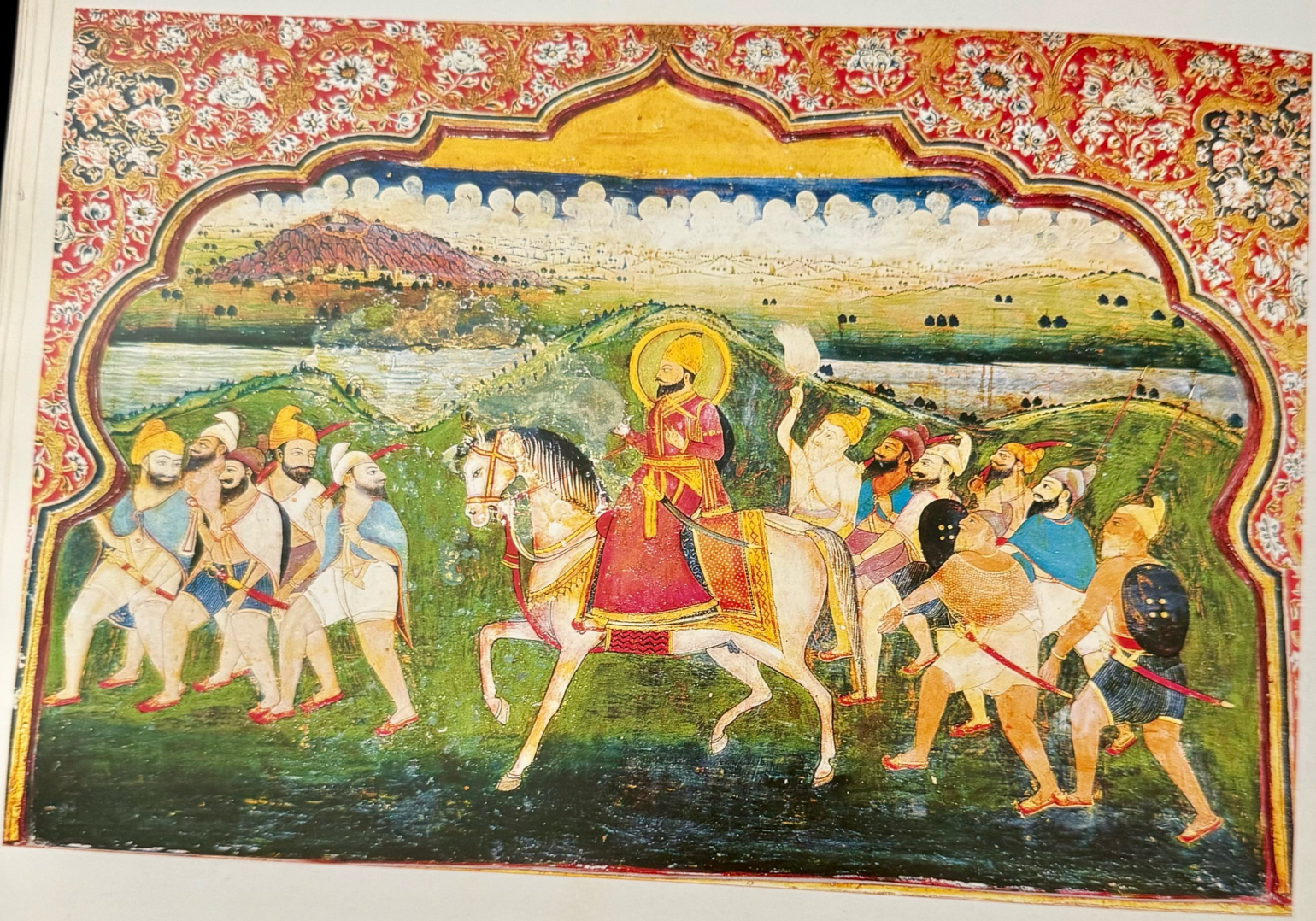
Janamsakhi murals and paintings of martyrs, including two of Guru Gobind Singh's sons.

Detail of a Janamsakhi panel.

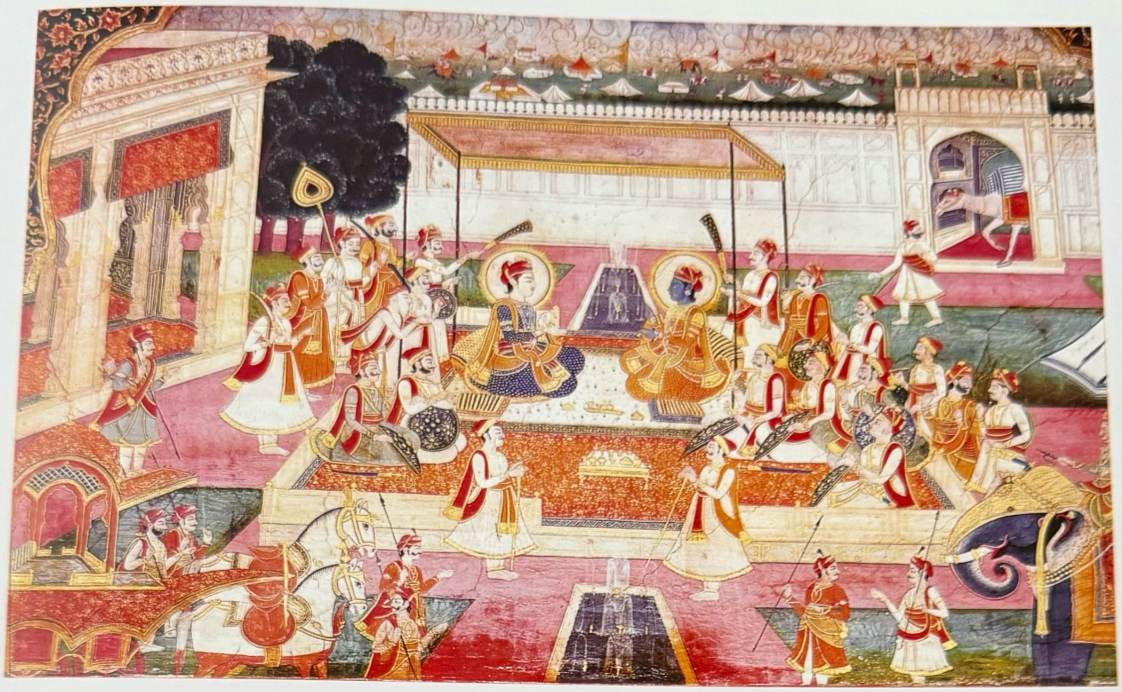
Marriage procession of Guru Nanak.

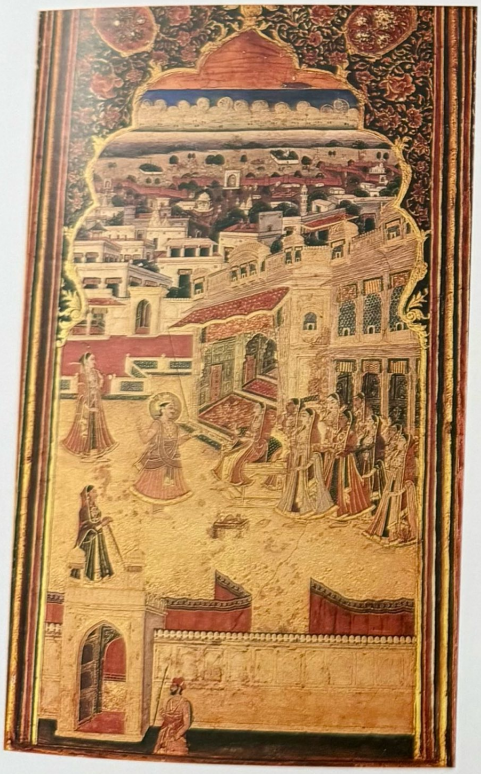


Arrival of Guru Nanak's marriage entourage and marriage ceremony.

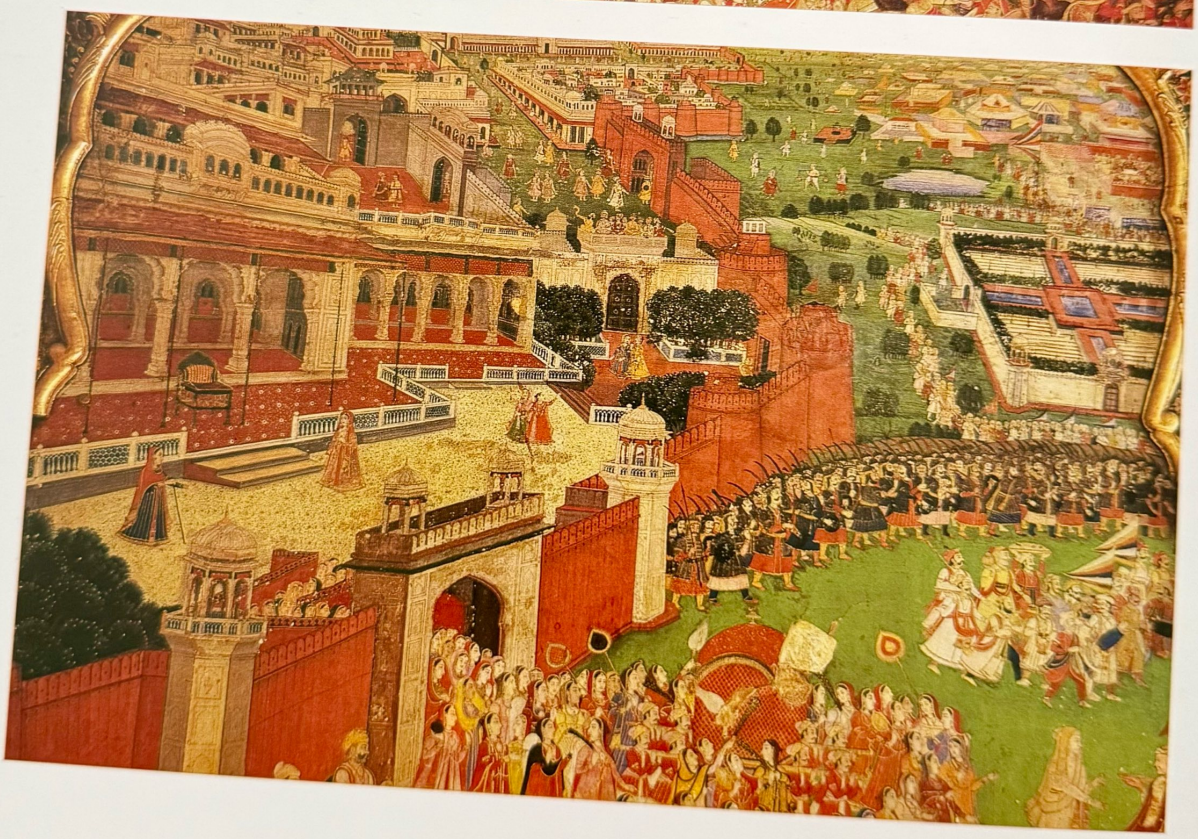


Murals at Qila Mubarak: Guru Gobind Singh with the *panj piara*.





Scenes from the Bhagwat Puran.



Lord Balram and the return of Rukmani.

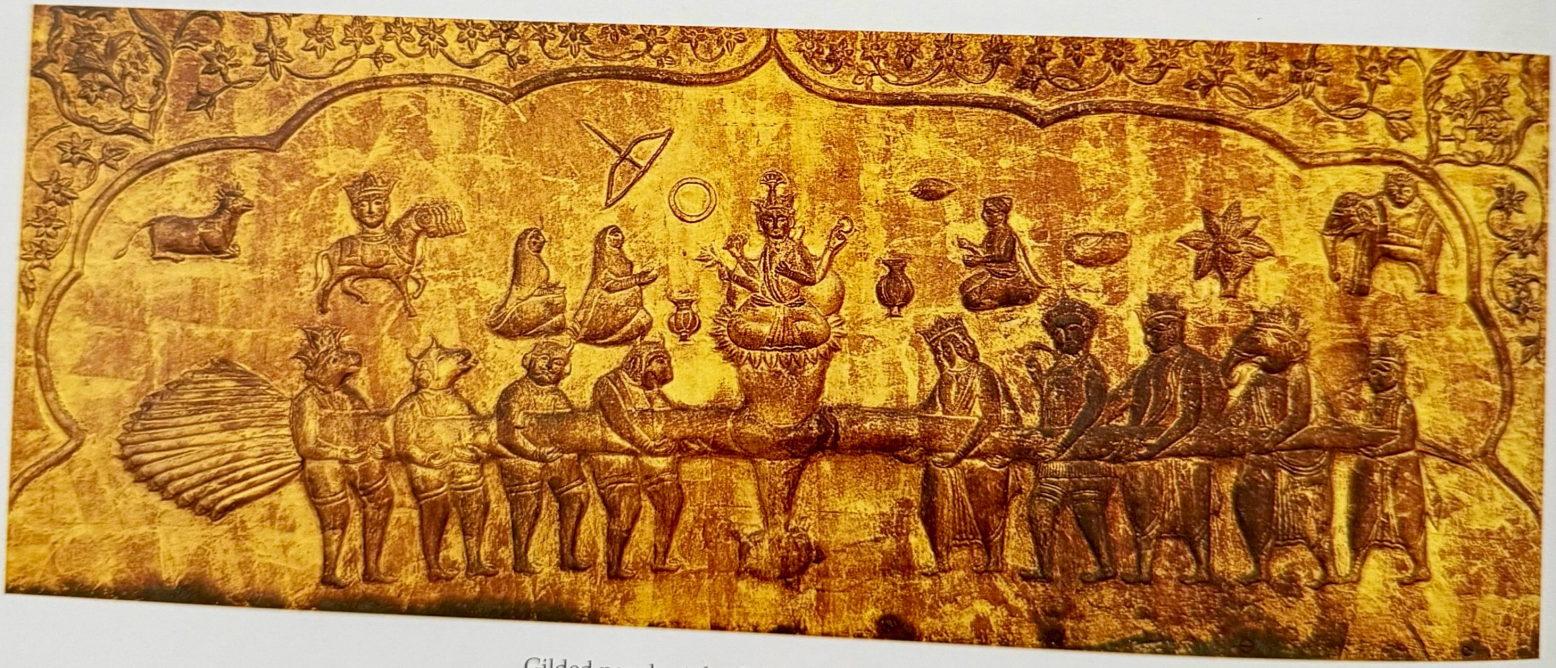
Lord Ganesha with Riddhi and Siddhi and (above) Goddess Durga.

A scene from the Bhagwat Puran.

Lord Krishna lifting mount Govardhan, dancing with milkmaids and indulging in *daan leela* with them.

Maharaja Narinder Singh of Patiala.

Murals in the Sheesh Mahal Patiala. Clockwise from the top:
Heaven and hell, Goddess Lakshmi, Narsinh *avtar*, Varaha *avtar*, Parasurama *avtar* killing king Karthavirya.



Gilded panels at the Golden Temple, Amritsar.
Top: Guru Nanak with Bala and Mardana. Above: The legend of *samudra manthan*.

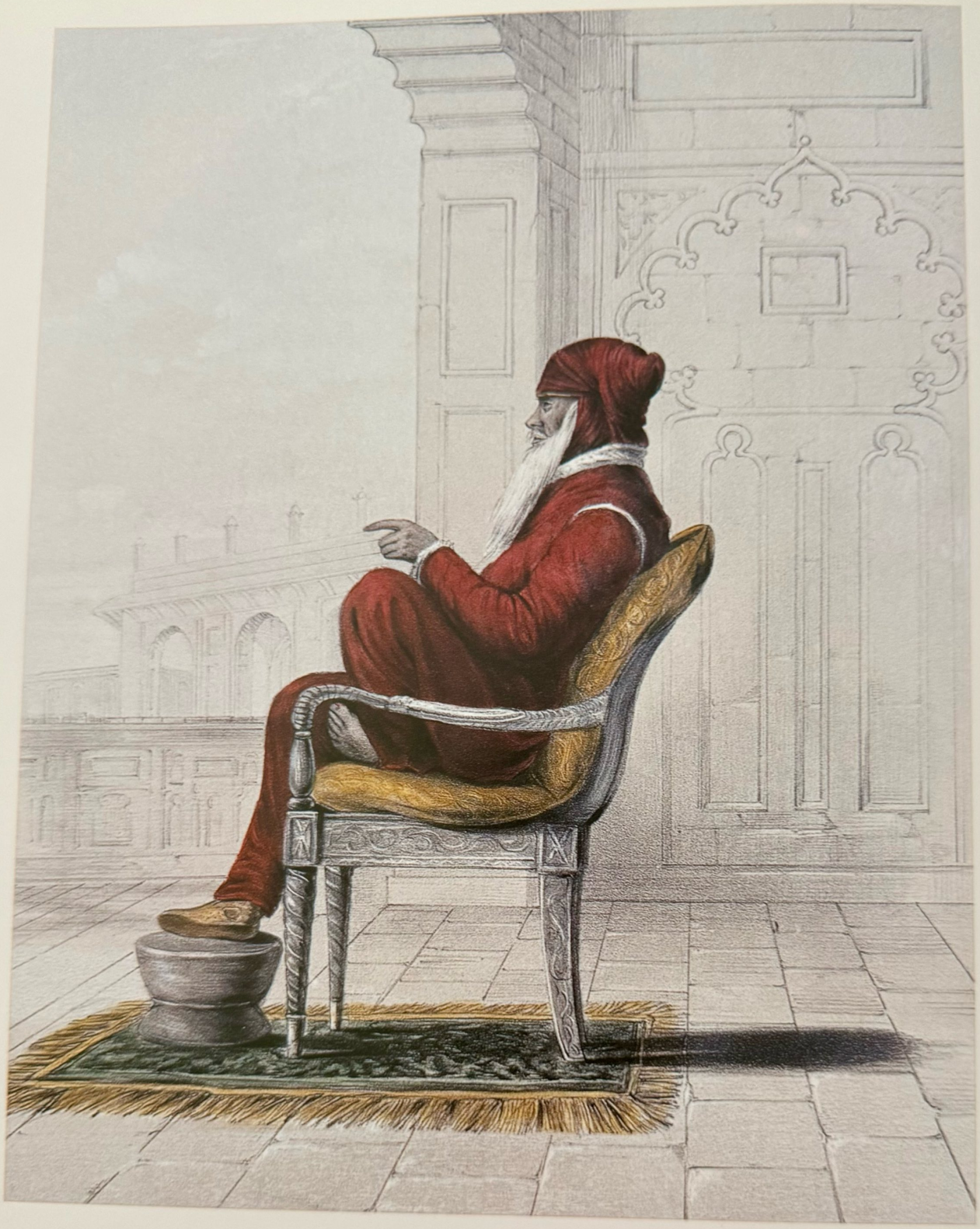
Guru Nanak with saints and Guru Gobind Singh with followers.

Guru Gobind Singh, with his four sons.

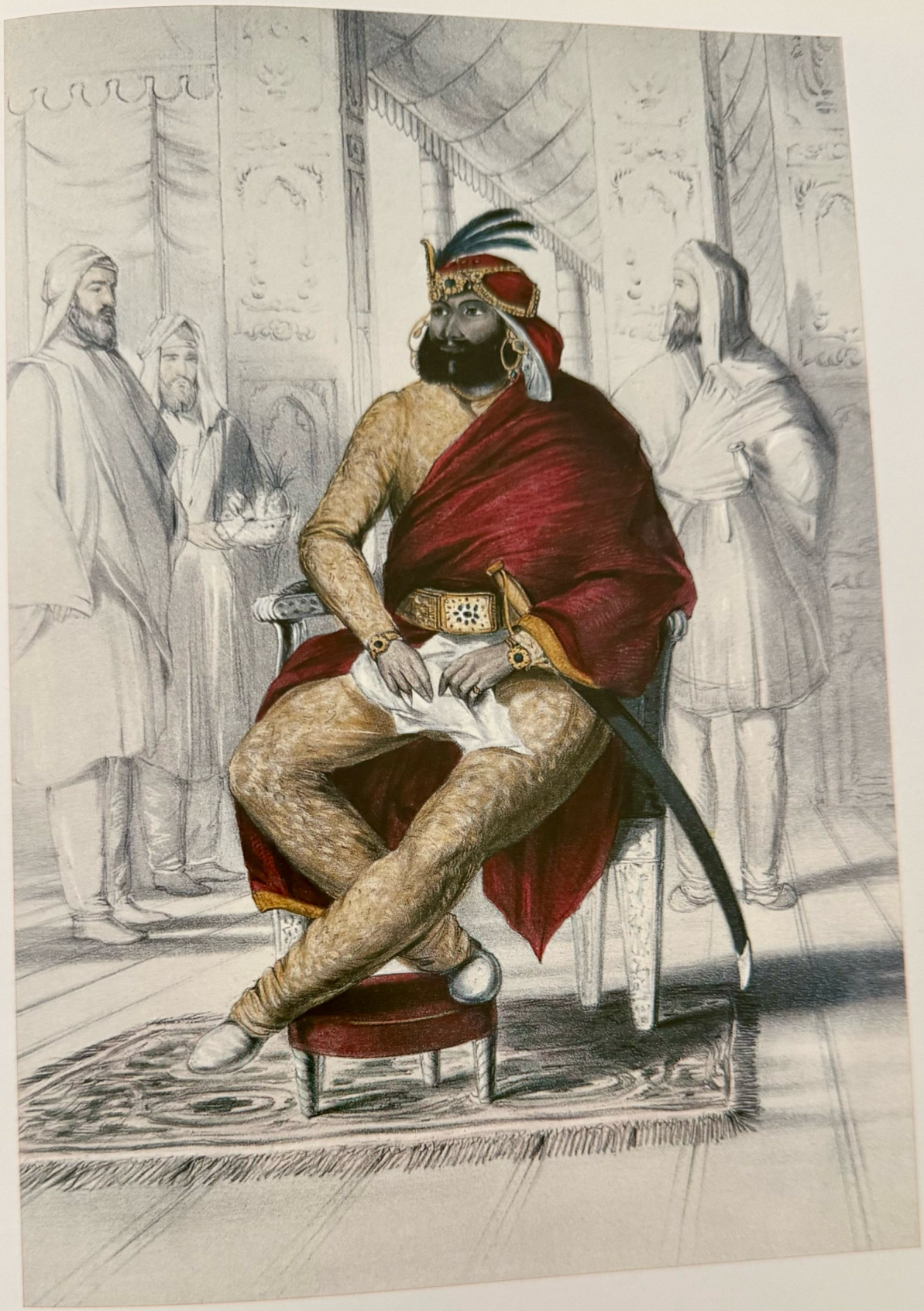
Scenes from Guru Nanak's Janamsakhi.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Maharaja Dalip Singh.



Maharaja Ranjit Singh.



Maharaja Sher Singh.

Kanwar Pratap Singh.

Raja Hira Singh.

Three Akalis.

Maharaja of Patiala.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's favourite horse, Laili.

Two Sikh warriors.

Golden Temple, Amritsar.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's camp.

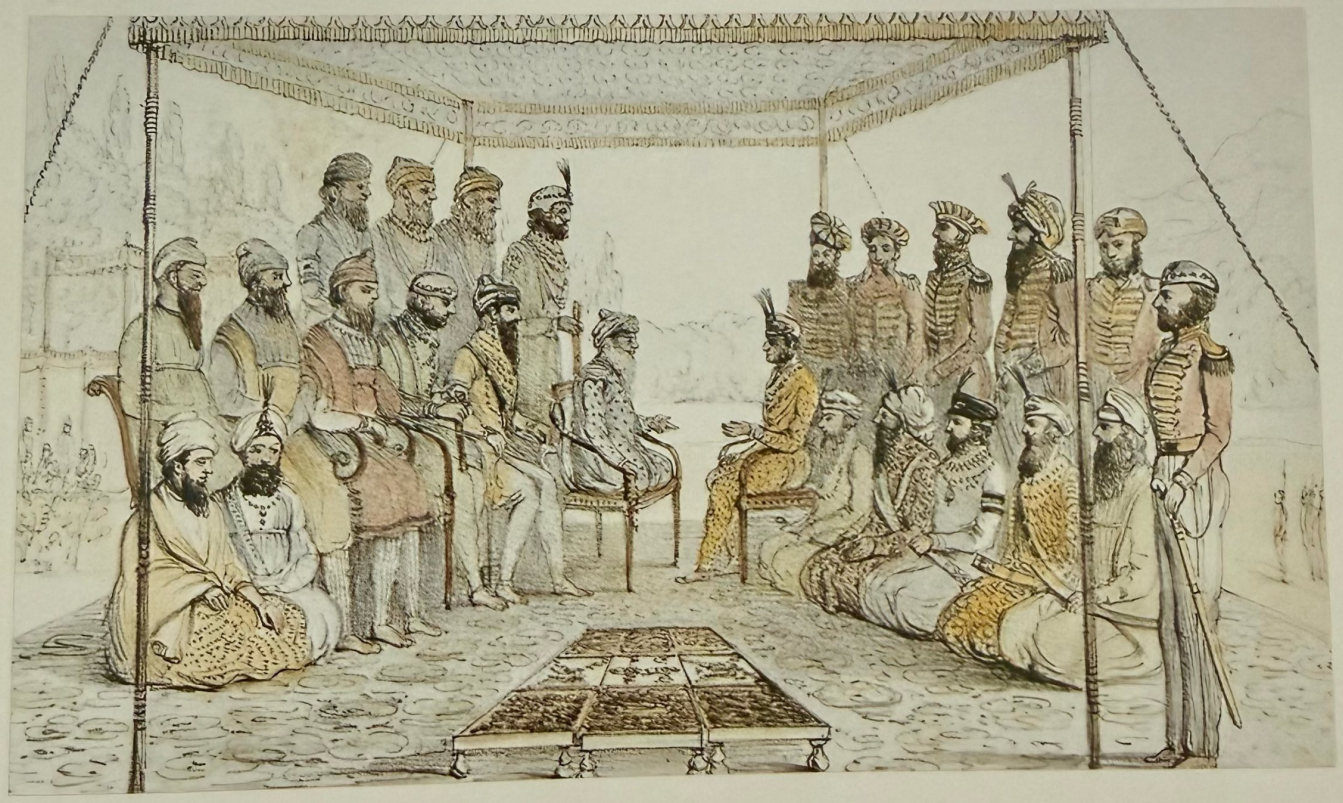
Top: Tomb of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Lahore. Eleven of his wives and female slaves immolated themselves in his funeral pyre.
Above: Shalimar gardens, Lahore.

Above: Mounted Akali. Top left: Raja Lal Singh. Right: Maharaja Sher Singh.

Clockwise from top left: Raja Dhian Singh, Raja Suchet Singh, Raja Kharak Singh, Raja Naunehal Singh.

Maharaja Gulab Singh.

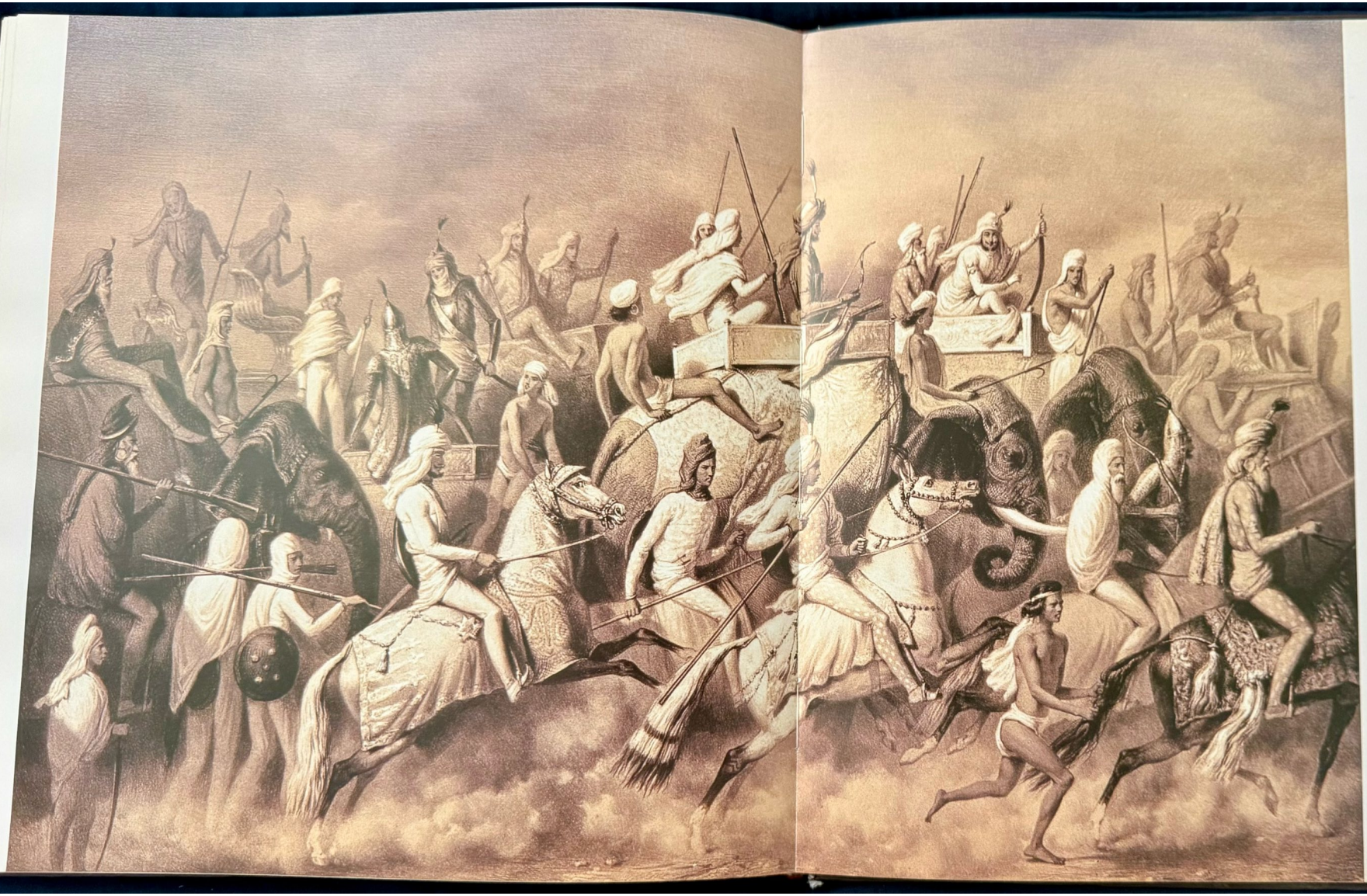
Top: Ajeet Singh. Above: Dancing girls.



Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Raja Lal Singh.

Maharaja Gulab Singh.



Maharaja Sher Singh on a hunt.

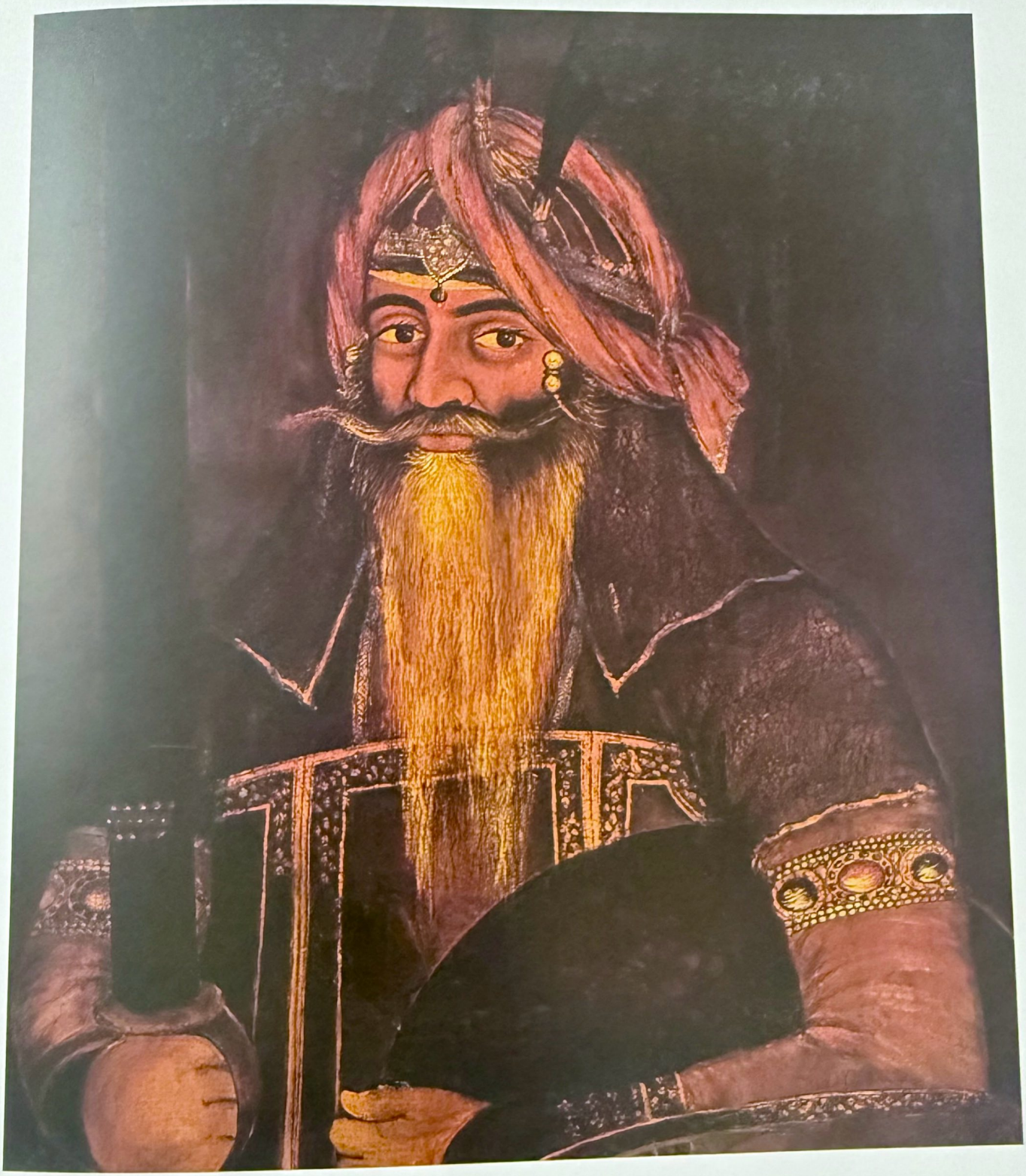
Sikh Chieftains.

Cavalcade of Sikh Chieftains on elephants.

Maharaja Sher Singh.

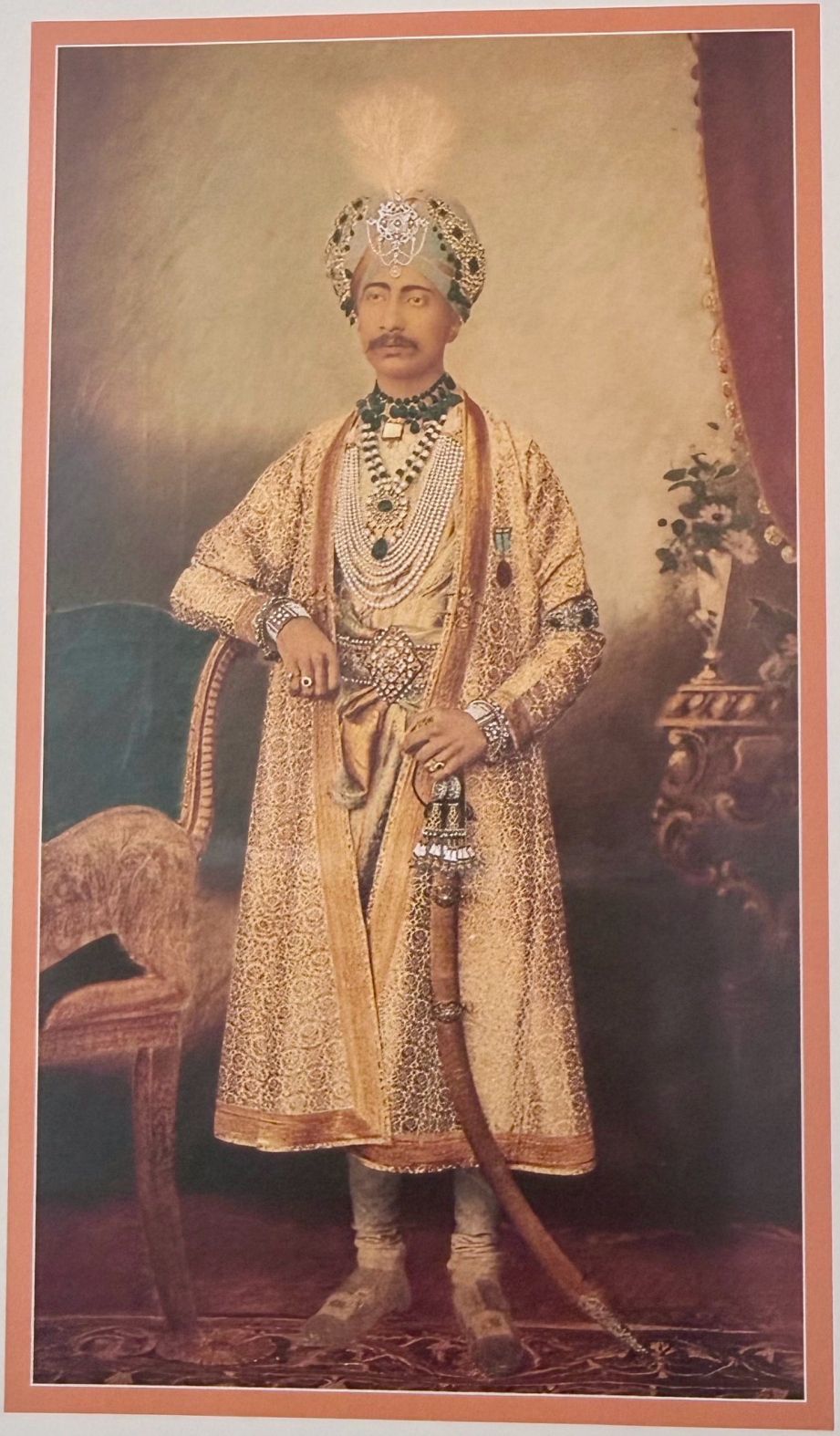
Street scene, Lahore.

Top: Detail from August Schoefft's famous painting 'The Court of Lahore', with Maharaja Sher Singh in the foreground.
Above: Nawab Ahmad Ali Khan of Malerkotla with British officers.



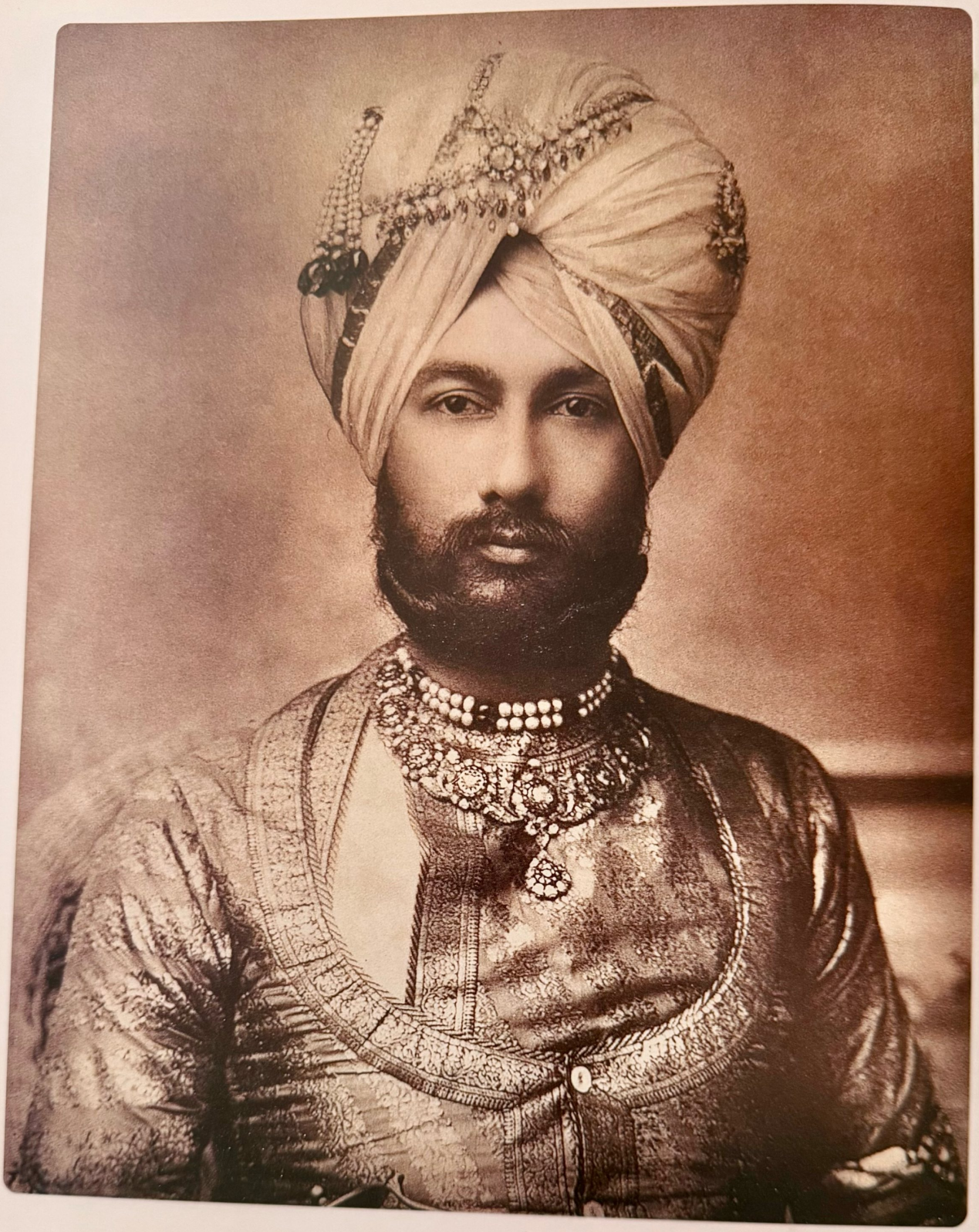
General Hari Singh Nalwa.

Above and opposite: Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala.

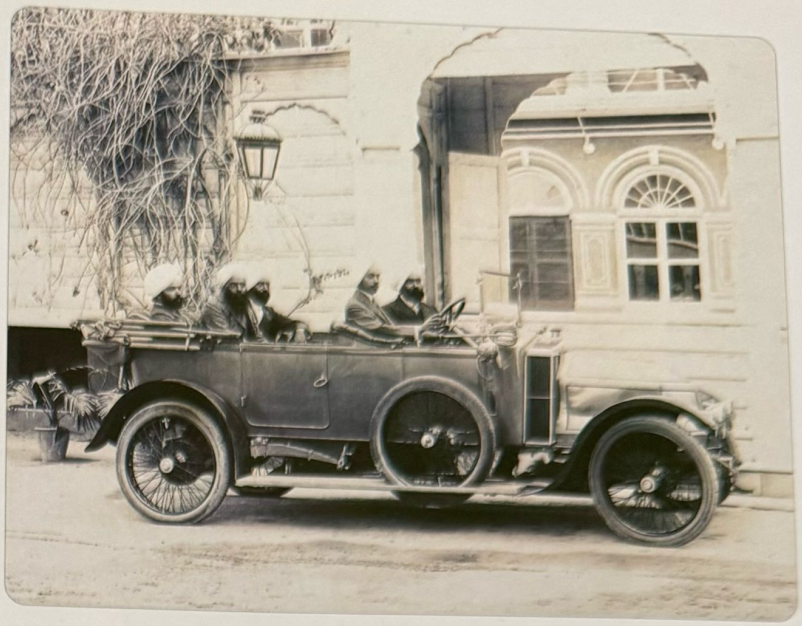


Nawab Ahmad Ali Khan of Malerkotla.

Nawab Saiduddin Ahmad Khan of Malerkotla.

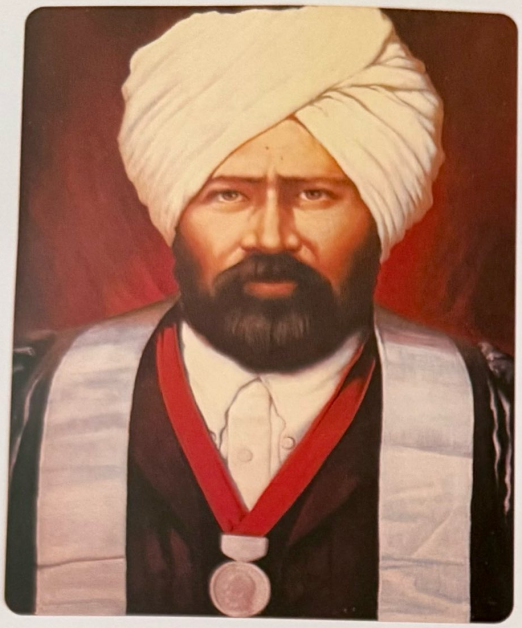


Maharaja Balbir Singh of Faridkot.



Maharaja Brijinder Singh of Faridkot (top left), with the British Political Agent on an elephant (above) and (top right) driving with his Superintendent of State and Sardar Bahadur Kartar Singh Brar of Mehmuana.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh of Jind and his Romanian wife, Olive.



Sikh zamindars of Punjab. Right: Sardar Bahadur Jai Singh Sidhu of Bidowali (Malwa).
Left top and above: Sardar Bahadur Sher Singh Randhawa and Sardarni Bachint Kaur of Bodlan (Doaba).

Top: Medals of Punjab with images of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Guru Gobind Singh.
Above: Marble busts of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala and officers of his Court.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND PROVENANCES

The author is grateful to the following institutions and individuals for allowing the photography of their collections, giving permission to publish them in this book (page numbers indicated) and earnestly supporting this project.

Bagrian family: 7.
Govt. Museum & Art Gallery, Chandigarh: 1, 6, 10, 35-37, 41, 42 (left), 43-50, 51 (right), 53, 57-65, 68-71, 73-75, 76 (top), 79 (right), 82-84, 86, 92 (right), 94-97, 136-137.
Harbans and Gursharan Sidhu: 56 (below).
Jaswant Singh: 8.
Maharaja Ranjit Singh Museum, Amritsar: 4, 38, 39, 52, 54, 67, 72, 76 (below), 77, 80, 81, 144 (top), 145, 156.
Maharani of Jind: 78, 152.
National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi: 5, 56 (top), 92 (left), 93.
National Museum, New Delhi: 40, 87.
Navjot and Preeti Randhawa: Endpaper, 42 (right), 119, 129, 146, 148-151.
Qila Mubarak, Patiala: 106-112.
Sheeshmahal Art and Medal Gallery, Patiala: 27-34, 51 (left), 66, 88-91, 113, 154.
The Imperial, New Delhi: 118-128, 130-135, 138-143, 144 (below), 147.

Adhiraj Sarin, Anjali Sen, Anoop Singh, Balmukund Aggarwal, Chiranjivi Singh, Dipesh Shroff, G.S. Cheema and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Museums of the Government of Punjab, Jasdev Singh Akoi, Jasleen Randhawa, Poonam Khanna, R. Richards, S.D. Charan, Sharif Ahmad, U.P.S. Gill, Vineeta Rai.

The sizes of the miniature paintings are not specifically mentioned, but since the format of the book is large an attempt has been made to reproduce the paintings and ivories in their actual sizes, and the double-spreads are the ones larger than average size. The two large canvasses illustrated are the copy of August Schoefft's 'The Court of Lahore' (page 144) and the Nawab of Malerkotla (page 144, size 12 feet by 24 feet). The original 'Court of Lahore' is 8 feet by 16 feet and is in the Princess Bamba Collection, Sikh Gallery, Lahore Fort Museum, Pakistan. Its copy (illustrated) in the Maharaja Ranjit Singh Museum, Amritsar, is smaller. The page size of the Guru Granth Sahib (page 40) is eighteen inches square. The Tanjore painting of the ten Sikh Gurus is two-and-half by three feet. For murals, where possible, visual clues have been provided to establish size reference.

The signature by Guru Gobind Singh in the Bagrian prayer book (page 7) was done in 1708. No paintings done contemporary to the Sikh Gurus survive (Guru Nanak, 1469-1539, till Guru Gobind Singh, 1666-1708). Most of the Sikh court paintings and ivories are of the early to middle nineteenth century period, including the outstanding series of the Sikh Gurus in the Sheeshmahal Art Gallery, Patiala (27-34). Out of that set the painting of Guru Arjan is damaged and that of Guru Harkrishan is missing. The paintings of Sikh Gurus in the Chandigarh Museum and Art Gallery (10, 35-37) are in the Guler style of the late eighteenth century, and part of the set is at the Lahore museum. The other paintings on religious themes and the *janamsakhi* series are from the early to middle nineteenth century. The Guru Granth Sahib on page 40 was done circa 1840, in Kashmir. The artists are generally anonymous though some are inscribed, like the brilliant painting of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) on page 53 by Imam Bakhsh of Lahore. The Company style paintings and those on contemporary views of society (bazaar style - for want of a better classification) came later. The Persian manuscript Gulgashat-i-Punjab and Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Military Manual are of the early nineteenth century. The gild relief panels are on door frame lintels in the Golden Temple complex and Baba Atal's gurudwara, Amritsar, dating roughly to the late nineteenth century. The murals of Qila Mubarak were done in the middle of the nineteenth century, and those of the newer Sheesh Mahal shortly after. The lithographs date back to the years their chronicles were published, as mentioned in the bibliography. The lithographs on pages 120-126 are after Emily Eden (1844), those on pages 127, 131, 134, 135 are after Osborne, published by Henry Colburn (1840), except the one of Lal Singh on page 131 (top) which was by C.S. Hardinge (1847). The drawing used for the lithograph of Maharaja Ranjit Singh on page 118 was by an unknown Indian artist and on its opposite page the lithograph of Maharaja Daleep Singh was engraved by D.J. Pound from a photograph by Mayall; the Golden Temple on page 128 is by William Carpenter, engraved by J.C. Armytage; the lithographs on pages 132-133 were by MacLure, MacDonald and MacGregor, those on page 130 were after sketches made by an unknown British army officer's wife and published by Dickenson Brothers in 1854. While all the above lithographs were done in England, those on pages 136-137 were by V. Bellermann of Berlin, in the late nineteenth century. On pages 138-143 are the remarkable Soltykoffs (1858). August Schoefft's 'The Court of Lahore' was painted circa 1850-55, though the one illustrated on page 144 is a copy in the Amritsar museum - in which Honigberger has been deprived of his flowing beard, apart from other loss of detail! The massive oil painting of the Nawab of Malerkotla on page 144 is by Bourne and Shepherd. On page 146 is a painting by Van Dyke and another autographed by the subject, Maharaja of Patiala, Bhupinder Singh. The photographs are mainly from the early twentieth century period onwards. The portrait of the Nawab of Malerkotla on page 148 is a large size photograph (two feet by four feet) hand coloured, while that of Maharaja of Faridkot on page 150 is by Bourne and Shepherd. The photograph of the Malerkotla Nawab on page 149 is mounted on a frame, the glass of which is etched with calligraphy and floral patterns. The marble busts on page 154 were sculpted by Jacquemont, early twentieth century. Of the medals on page 154, on top left is the 'Order of Ranjit Singh', which bears the portrait of the Maharaja in relief with two bulls and an eagle on a sword. On top right is the 'Auspicious Star of Punjab' which Maharaja Ranjit Singh presented to the Governor-General, the Earl of Auckland, on his visit to Lahore in 1838. In the center of this medal is a miniature painting of the Maharaja in profile, with a lily in his hand, and it is adorned with uncut diamonds and enamel work on its reverse. In the second row is the 'Order of Guru Ghar Manya Mandal' (badge and medal) instituted by Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala. It bears the portrait of Guru Gobind Singh.

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Image of Maharaja Ranjit Singh on a 19th century shield.